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FOULSHAM'S 'BOY AND GIRL' FICTION LIBRARY

WESTWARD HO!

OR

THE VOYAGES AND ADVENTURES

OF

SIR AMYAS LEIGH, KNIGHT,
Of Burrough in the County of Devon

IN THE REIGN OF HER MOST GLORIOUS MAJESTY
QUEEN ELIZABETH

RECORDED BY

CHARLES KINGSLEY

WITH FIVE COLOUR PLATES BY
H. G. BREAR

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MADE IN GREAT BRITAIN

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Abridged Edition

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TO
THE RAJAH SIR JAMES BROOKE, K.C.B.
AND
GEORGE AUGUSTUS SELWYN, D.D.

BISHOP OF NEW ZEALAND

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

BY ONE WHO (UNKNOWN TO THEM) HAS NO OTHER METHOD
OF EXPRESSING HIS ADMIRATION AND REVERENCE FOR THEIR
CHARACTERS.

THAT TYPE OF ENGLISH VIRTUE, AT ONCE MANFUL AND GODLY,
PRACTICAL AND ENTHUSIASTIC, PRUDENT AND SELI-SACRIFICING,
WHICH HE HAS TRIED TO DEPICT IN THESE PAGES, THEY HAVE
EXHIBITED IN A FORM EVEN PURER AND MORE HEROIC THAN THAT
IN WHICH HE HAS DRUST IT, AND THAN THAT IN WHICH IT WAS
EXHIBITED BY THE WORTHIES WHOM ELIZABETH, WITHOUT
DISTINCTION OF RANK OR AGE, GATHERED ROUND HER IN THE
EVER GLORIOUS WARS OF HER GREAT REIGN.

February, 1855.

C.K.

DUX FŒMINA FACTI.

Motto of the Armada Medals, 1588

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WESTWARD HO!

CHAPTER I

HOW MR. OXENHAM SAW THE WHITE BIRD

ONE summer's afternoon, in the year 1575, a tall and fair boy came lingering along Bideford quay, in his scholar's gown, with satchel and slate in hand, watching wistfully the shipping and the sailors, till, just after he had passed the bottom of the High Street, he came opposite to one of the many taverns which looked out upon the river. In the open bay-window sat merchants and gentlemen, discoursing over their afternoon's draught of sack and outside the door was gathered a group of sailors, listening earnestly to some one who stood in the midst. The boy, all alive for any sea-news came in for the following speech, delivered in a loud bold voice, with a strong Devonshire accent.

"If you don't believe me, go and see, or stay here and grow all over blue mould. I tell you I saw it with these eyes, and so did Salvation Yeo there, through a window in the lower room; and we measured the heap, as I am a Christened man, seventy foot long ten foot broad, and twelve foot high, of silver bars, and each bar between a thirty and forty pound weight. And says Captain Drake: 'There, my lads of Devon, I've brought you to the mouth of the world's treasure-house, and it's your own fault now, if you don't sweep it out as empty as a stock-fish.'"

"Why didn't you bring some of they home, t. n. Mr. Oxenham?"

"Why weren't you there to help to carry them? We would have brought 'em away, safe enough, and young Drake and I had broke the door abroad already, but Captain Drake goes off in a dead faint; and when we came to look, he had a wound in his leg you might have laid three fingers in. His brother and I got him away to the boats, he kicking and struggling, and bidding us let him go on with the fight. And tell me, ye sons of shotten herrings wasn't it worth more to save him than the dirty silver? for silver we can get again, brave boys: there's more fish in the sea than ever came out of it, and more silver in Nombre de Dios than would paye all the streets in the west cuntry: but of such captains as Franky Drake, heaven never makes but one at a time.

and if we lose him, good-bye to England's luck, say I, and who don't agree, let him choose his weapons, and I'm his man."

He who delivered this harangue was a tall and sturdy personage, with a florid black-bearded face. He was dressed (contrary to all sumptuary laws of the time) in a suit of crimson velvet, a little the worse, perhaps, for wear ; his fingers sparkled with rings ; he had two or three gold chains about his neck, and large earrings in his ears ; on his head was a broad velvet Spanish hat, in which instead of a feather was fastened with a great gold clasp a whole Quezal bird. As he finished his speech, he took off the said hat, and said : " I, John Oxenham, of South Tawton, for a sign to all brave lads of Devon, that as the Spaniards are the masters of the Indians, we're the masters of the Spaniards ;" and he replaced his hat.

A murmur of applause followed ; but one hinted, that he " doubted the Spaniards were too many for them."

" Too many ? How many men did we take Nombre de Dios with ? Seventy-three were we, and before we saw the Spanish main, half were used up with the scurvy ; and in Port Pheasant Captain Rawse of Cowes fell in with us, and that gave us some thirty hands more ; and with that handful, my lads, only fifty-three in all, we picked the lock of the new world ! And whom did we lose but our trumpeter ? I tell you, those Spaniards are rank cowards, as all bullies are."

" You're right, Captain," sang out a tall gaunt fellow who stood close to him ; " one westcountryman can fight two easterlings, and an easterling can beat three Dons any day. Eh ! my lads of Devon ?"

" Come," said Oxenham, " come along ! Who lists ? Who'll make his fortune ?"

" Who'll list ?" cried the gaunt man again ; " now's your time ! We want a dozen out of you Bideford men, and just a boy or two, and then we'm off and away, and make our fortunes, or go to heaven."

" Now" said Oxenham. " Who'll join ? who'll join ? Don't think you're buying a pig in a poke. I know the road, and Salvation Yeo, here, too, who was the gunner's mate, as well as I do the narrow seas, and better."

Oxenham, seeing that his hearers were becoming moved, called through the open window for a great tankard of sack, and passed it from hand to hand.

The school-boy, who had been devouring with eyes and ears all which passed, and had contrived by this time to edge himself into the inner ring, now stood face to face with the hero of the emerald

crest. But when he saw the sailors, one after another come forward and offer to join Mr. Oxenham, his soul burnt within him, and when the group had somewhat broken up he asked boldly if Mr. Oxenham would allow him to examine a very marvellous horn he was holding. This favour was granted readily. Lingeringly and longingly the boy turned it round and round, and thought the owner of it more fortunate than Khan or Kaiser. Oh, if he could but possess that horn, what needed he on earth beside to make him blest !

"I say, will you sell this ?

"Yea, marry, or my own soul, if I can get the worth of it."

After much fumbling, he pulled out a tester (the only one he had), and asked if that would buy it ?

"That ? no, nor twenty of them."

The boy thought over what a good knight-errant would do in such case, and then answered, "Tell you what ; I'll fight you for it."

"Thank'ee, Sir !"

"Break the jackanapes' head for him, Yeo," said Oxenham.

Call me jackanapes again, and I break yours, Sir." And the boy lifted his fist fiercely.

Oxenham looked at him a minute smilingly. "Tut ! tut ! my man, hit one of your own size, if you will, and spare little folk like me !"

"If I have a boy's age, Sir, I have a man's fist. I shall be fifteen years old this month, and know how to answer any one who insults me."

"Fifteen, my young cockerel ? you look like twenty," said Oxenham, with an admiring glance at the lad's broad limbs. "Fifteen ? If I had half-a-dozen such lads as you, I would make knights of them before I died. Eh, Yeo ?"

At which there was a general laugh, in which Oxenham joined as loudly as any, and then bade the lad tell him why he was so keen after the horn.

"Because," said he, looking up boldly, "I want to go to sea. I want to see the Indies. I want to fight the Spaniards. Though I am a gentleman's son, I'd a deal liefer be a cabin-boy on board your ship."

"And you shall," cried Oxenham, with a great oath. "Whose son are you, my gallant fellow ?"

"Mr. Leigh's, of Burrough Court."

"Bless his soul ! I know him as well as I do the Eddystone, and his kitchen too. Who sups with him to-night ?"

"Sir Richard Grenville."

" Dick Grenville ? I did not know he was in town. Go home and tell your father John Oxenham will come and keep him company. There, off with you ! I'll make all straight with the good gentleman, and you shall have your venture with me ; and as for the horn, let him have the horn, Yeo, and I'll give you a noble for it."

" Not a penny, noble Captain. If young master will take a poor mariner's gift, there it is, for the sake of his love to the calling, and Heaven send him luck therein."

Now this young gentleman, Amyas Leigh, though come of as good blood as any in Devon, and having lived all his life in what we should even now call the very best society, and being (on account of the valour, courtesy, and truly noble qualities which he showed forth in his most eventful life) chosen by me as the hero and centre of this story, was not, saving for his good looks, by any means what would be called now-a-days an " interesting " youth, still less a " highly educated " one.

Mr. Oxenham came that evening to supper as he had promised. After the meal, he said to Dick Grenville or Sir Richard Grenville,

" Come now, do thou talk the good man round and I'll warrant myself to talk round the good wife."

The personage whom Oxenham addressed thus familiarly, answered by a somewhat sarcastic smile, and Oxenham felt somewhat puzzled and nettled, when, after having asked Mr. Leigh's leave to take young Amyas with him, and set forth in glowing colours the purpose of his voyage, he found Sir Richard utterly unwilling to help him with his suit.

" Heyday, Sir Richard ? You are not surely gone over to the side of those canting fellows who pretend to turn up their noses at Franky Drake as a pirate, and be hanged to them ? "

" My friend Oxenham," answered he, in the sententious and measured style of the day, " I have always held that Mr. Drake's booty, as well as my good friend Captain Hawkins's is lawful prize, as being taken from the Spaniard, who has no right to the same, having robbed it violently, by torture and extreme iniquity, from the poor Indian."

" Amen," said Mrs. Leigh.

" I say Amen too," quoth Oxenham.

" And I also," went on Sir Richard ; " for the rightful owners of the said goods being either miserably dead, or incapable by reason of their servitude of ever recovering any share thereof, the treasure, falsely called Spanish, cannot be better bestowed than in building up the state of England against them, our natural enemies." And as he warmed in his speech, his eyes flashed very fire.

"Hark now!" said Oxenham, "who can speak more boldly than he! and yet he will not help this lad to so noble an adventure."

"You have asked his father and mother: what is their answer?"

"Mine is this," said Mr. Leigh; "if it be God's will that my boy should become hereafter such a mariner as Sir Richard Grenville, let him go, and God be with him; but let him first bide here at home and be trained, if God give me grace, to become such a gentleman as Sir Richard Grenville."

Sir Richard bowed low, and Mrs. Leigh catching up the last word—

"There, Mr. Oxenham, you cannot gainsay that, unless you will be discourteous to his worship. And for me—though it be a weak woman's reason, yet it is a mother's: he is my only child. His elder brother is far away. God only knows whether I shall see him again; and what are all reports of his virtues and his learning to me, compared to that sweet presence which I daily miss? Ah! Mr. Oxenham, my beautiful Joseph is gone; and though he be lord of Pharaoh's household, yet he is far away in Egypt; and you will take Benjamin also! Ah! Mr. Oxenham, you have no child, or you would not ask for mine!"

"And how do you know that, my sweet Madam?" said the adventurer, turning first deadly pale, and then glowing red. Her last words had touched him to the quick in some unexpected place; and rising, he courteously laid her hand to his lips, and said—"I say no more. Farewell, sweet Madam, and God send all men such wives as you."

"And all wives," said she, smiling, "such husbands as mine." "Farewell, friend Leigh. Farewell, gallant Dick Grenville," answered he.

"Let us drink to our merry meeting, before you go," said Leigh. And rising, and putting the tankard of malmsey to his lips, he passed it to Sir Richard, who rose, and saying, "To the fortune of a bold mariner and a gallant gentleman," drank, and put the cup into Oxenham's hand.

The adventurer's face was flushed, and his eye wild. Whether from the liquor he had drunk during the day, or whether from Mrs. Leigh's last speech, he had not been himself for a few minutes. He lifted the cup, and was in act to pledge them, when he suddenly dropped it on the table, and pointed, staring and trembling, up and down, and round the room, as if following some fluttering object.

"There! Do you see it? The bird!—the bird with the white breast!"

Each looked at the other but Leigh, who was a quick-witted man, and an old courtier, forced a laugh instantly, and cried—

“Nonsense, brave Jack Oxenham ! Leave white birds for men who will show the white feather. Mrs. Leigh waits to pledge you.”

Oxenham recovered himself in a moment, pledged them all round, drinking deep and fiercely ; and after hearty farewells, departed.

After he was gone, and while Leigh was attending him to the door, Mrs. Leigh and Grenville kept a few minutes dead silence. At last—“ God help him ! ” said she.

“Amen,” said Grenville, “for he never needed it more. But, indeed, Madam, I put no faith in such omens.”

“But Sir Richard, that bird has been seen for generations before the death of any of his family. I know those who were at South Tawton when his mother died and they saw it. God help him ! for, after all, he is a proper man.”

“So many a lady has thought before now, Mrs. Leigh, and well for him if they had not. But, indeed, I make no account of omens. When God is ready for each man, then he must go and when can he go better ? ”

“But,” said Mr. Leigh, who entered, “I have seen, and especially when I was in Italy, omens and prophecies before now beget their own fulfilment, by driving men into recklessness, and making them run headlong upon that very ruin which, as they fancied, was running upon them.”

“And which,” said Sir Richard, “they might have avoided, if, instead of trusting in I know not what dumb and dark destiny, they had trusted in the living God. I, too, know, and know not how I know, that I shall never die in my bed.”

“God forbid ! ” cried Mrs. Leigh.

“And why, fair Madam, if I die doing my duty to my God and my queen ? The thought never moves me : nay, to tell the truth, I pray often enough that I may be spared the miseries of imbecile old age. Mr. Leigh, you have done wisely to-night. Poor Oxenham does not go on his voyage with a single eye. I have talked about him with Drake and Hawkins ; and I guess why Mrs. Leigh touched him so home, when she told him that he had no child.”

“Has he one, then, in the West Indies ? ” cried the good lady.

“God knows ; and God grant we may not hear of shame and sorrow fallen upon an ancient and honourable house of Devon. My brother Stukely is woe enough to North Devon for this generation.”

"And now come hither to me, my adventurous godson, and don't look in such doleful dumps. I hear you have broken all the sailor boys' heads already."

"Nearly all," said young Amyas, with due modesty. "But am I not to go to sea?"

"All things in their time, my boy, and God forbid that either I or your worthy parents should keep you from that noble calling which is the safeguard of this England and her queen."

"I should like to be a brave adventurer, like Mr. Oxenham."

"God grant you become a braver man than he! for as I think, to be bold against the enemy is common to the brutes; but the prerogative of a man is to be bold against himself."

"How, Sir?"

"To conquer our own fancies, Amyas, and our own lusts, and our ambition, in the sacred name of duty; this it is to be truly brave, and truly strong; for he who cannot rule himself, how can he rule his crew or his fortunes? Come, now, I will make you a promise. If you will bide quietly at home, and I am from your father and mother all which befits a gentleman and a Christian, as well as a seaman, the day shall come when you shall sail with Richard Grenville himself, or with better men than he, on a nobler errand than gold-hunting on the Spanish Main."

"O my boy, my boy!" said Mrs. Leigh, "hear what the good Sir Richard promises you. Many an earl's son would be glad to be in your place."

CHAPTER II

HOW AMYAS CAME HOME THE FIRST TIME

FIVE years are past and gone. It is nine of the clock on a still, bright November morning: but the bells of Bideford church are still ringing. Bideford streets are a very flower garden of all the colours, swarming with seamen and burghers, and burghers' wives and daughters, all in their holiday attire. Garlands are hung across the streets, and ships in the pool are dressed in all their flags, and give tumultuous vent to their feelings by peals of ordnance of every size. Along the little churchyard, packed full with women, streams all the gentle blood of North Devon,—tall and stately men, and fair ladies, worthy of the days when the gentry of England were by due right the leaders of the people, by personal prowess and beauty, as well as by intellect and education. And at last there is a silence within the church, and the church-

wardens and sidesmen bustle down to the entrance, rods in hand, and the rector begins, not the morning service, but the good old thanksgiving after a victory at sea.

And what is it which has thus sent old Bideford wild with godly joy and pious mirth ? Why are all eyes fixed, with greedy admiration, on those four weather-beaten mariners, decked out with knots and ribbons by loving hands ? And why, as the five go instinctively up to the altar, and there fall on their knees before the rails, are all eyes turned to the pew, where Mrs. Leigh of Burrough has hid her face between her hands, and her hood rustles and shakes to her joyful sobs ? Because these are Devon men, and men of Bideford, whose names are Amyas Leigh of Burrough, John Staveley, Michael Heard and Jonas Marshall of Bideford, and Thomas Braund of Clovelly : and they, the first of all English mariners, have sailed round the world with Francis Drake, and are come hither to give God thanks.

It is a long story. *For somewhat more than a twelvemonth after Mr. Oxenham's departure, young Amyas had gone on quietly enough, according to promise with the exception of certain occasional outbursts of fierceness common to all young male animals, and especially to boys of any strength of character. Then, his father, having gone down on business to the Exeter Assizes, caught gaol-fever from the prisoners ; sickened in the very court ; and died within a week.

And now, Mrs. Leigh, at little past forty, was left a widow ; lovely still in face and figure ; and still more lovely from the divine calm which brooded, like the dove of peace and the Holy Spirit of God over every look, and word, and gesture ; a sweetness which had been ripened by storm, as well as by sunshine ; which this world had not given, and could not take away. No wonder that Sir Richard and Lady Grenville loved her ; no wonder that her children worshipped her ; no wonder that the young Amyas, when the first burst of grief was over, and he knew again where he stood, felt that a new life had begun for him ; that his mother was no more to think and act for him only, but that he must think and act for his mother. And so it was, that on the very day after his father's funeral, when school-hours were over, instead of coming straight home, he walked boldly into Sir Richard Grenville's house, and asked to see his godfather.

" You must be my father now, Sir," said he firmly.

And Sir Richard looked at the boy's broad strong face, and swore a great and holy oath that he would be a father to him, and a brother to his mother. And Lady Grenville took the boy by the hand, and walked home with him to Burrough ; and there the two

fair women fell on each other's necks, and wept together ; the one for the loss which had been, the other, as by a prophetic instinct, for the like loss which was to come to her also.

But why did Amyas go to the South Seas ?

Vindex Brimblecombe, whilom servitor of Exeter College, Oxford, (commonly called Sir Vindex, after the fashion of the times,) was, in those days, master of the grammar-school of Bideford. He was, at root, a godly and kind-hearted pedant enough : but, like most schoolmasters in the old flogging days, had his heart pretty well hardened by long baneful licence to inflict pain at will on those weaker than himself. Be that as it may, old Sir Vindex had heart enough to feel that it was now his duty to take especial care of the fatherless boy to whom he tried to teach his *qui, quæ, quid* ; but the only outcome of that new sense of responsibility was a rapid increase in the number of floggings, which rose from about two a week, to one per diem, not without consequences to the pedagogue himself.

For all this while, Amyas had never for a moment lost sight of his darling desire for a sea life, and he used to console himself in school-hours by drawing ships, and imaginary charts, upon his slate, instead of minding his "humanities."

Now it befel upon an afternoon, that he was very busy, at a map whereon was a great castle, and at the gate thereof a dragon, terrible to see. To behold which marvel of art, all the other boys at the same desk must needs club their heads together, and with the more security, because Sir Vindex, as was his custom after dinner, was lying back in his chair, and slept the sleep of the just.

The shoving and tittering rose to such a pitch, that Cerberus awoke, and demanded sternly what the noise was about. To which, of course, there was no answer.

"You, of course, Leigh ! Come up, Sir, and show me your exercitation."

Now of Amyas's exercitation not a word was written ; and, moreover, he was in the very act of putting the last touches to Mr. Brimblecombe's portrait. Whereon, to the astonishment of all hearers, he made answer—

"All in good time, Sir !" and went on drawing.

"In good time, Sir ! Insolent, *veni et vapula !*

But Amyas went on drawing.

"Come hither, Sirrah, or I'll flay you alive !"

"Wait a bit !" answered Amyas.

The old gentleman jumped up, ferula in hand, and darted across the school, and saw himself upon the fatal slate.

"*Pro flagitium !* what have we here, villain ?" and clutching

at his victim, he raised the cane. Whereupon, with a serene and cheerful countenance, up rose the mighty form of Amyas Leigh, a head and shoulders above his tormentor, and that slate descended on the bald coxcomb of Sir Vindex Brimblecombe, with so shrewd a blow, that slate and pate cracked at the same instant, and the poor pedagogue dropped to the floor, and lay for dead.

After which Amyas arose, and walked out of the school, and so quietly home ; and having taken counsel with himself, went to his mother, and said, " Please, mother, I've broken schoolmaster's head."

" Broken his head, thou wicked boy ! " shrieked the poor widow ; " what didst do that for ? "

" I can't tell," said Amyas, penitently ; " I couldn't help it. It looked so smooth, and bald, and round, and—you know ? "

" I know ? Oh, wicked boy ! thou hast given place to the devil ; and now, perhaps, thou hast killed him."

" Killed the devil ? " asked Amyas, hopefully, but doubtfully.

" No, killed the schoolmaster, sirrah ! Is he dead ? "

" I don't think he's dead ; his coxcomb sounded too hard for that. But had not I better go and tell Sir Richard ? "

The poor mother could hardly help laughing, in spite of her terror, at Amyas's perfect coolness (which was not in the least meant for insolence), and being at her wits' end, sent him as usual to his godfather.

Amyas rehearsed his story again, with pretty nearly the same exclamations, to which he gave pretty nearly the same answers ; and then—

" What was he going to do to you, then, sirrah ? "

" Flog me, because I could not write my exercise, and so drew a picture of him instead."

" What ! art afraid of being flogged ? "

" Not a bit ; besides, I'm too much accustomed to it ; but I was busy, and he was in such a desperate hurry ; and, oh, Sir, if you had but seen his bald head, you would have broken it yourself ! "

Now, Sir Richard had, twenty years ago, in like place, and very much in like manner, broken the head of Vindex Brimblecombe's father, schoolmaster in his day ; and therefore had a precedent to direct him ; and he answered,

" Amyas ! those who cannot obey, will never be fit to rule. If thou canst not keep discipline now, thou wilt never make a company or a crew keep it when thou art grown. Dost mind that, sirrah ? "

" Yes," said Amyas.

"Then go back to school this moment, Sir, and be flogged."

"Very well," said Amyas, considering that he had got off very cheaply ; while Sir Richard, as soon as he was out of the room, lay back in his chair, and laughed till he cried.

So Amyas went back, and said that he was come to be flogged ; whereon the old schoolmaster, whose pate had been plastered meanwhile, wept tears of joy over the returning prodigal, and then gave him such a switching as he did not forget for eight-and-forty hours.

But that evening Sir Richard and Lady Grenville went up to Burrough and after much talk and many tears, matters were so concluded that Amyas Leigh found himself riding joyfully towards Plymouth, by the side of Sir Richard, and being handed over to Captain Drake, vanished for three years from the good town of Bideford.

And now he is returned in triumph, and the observed of all observers ; and looks round and round, and sees all faces whom he expects, except one ; and that the one which he had rather see than his mother's ? He is not quite sure. Shame on himself !

And now the prayers being ended, no sooner had the clerk given out the first verse of the *Te Deum*, than it was taken up by five hundred voices within the church. And as it died away, the shipping in the river made answer with their thunder, and the crowd streamed out again toward the Bridge Head, whither Sir Richard Grenville, and Sir John Chichester, and Mr. Salterne, the Mayor, led the five heroes of the day to await the pageant which had been prepared in honour of them. And as they went by, there were few in the crowd who did not press forward to shake them by the hand.

An old red-cloaked dame in the crowd struck by some hidden impulse, sprang forward, and catching hold of young Amyas's sleeve—

"Kind Sir ! dear Sir ! For Christ his sake answer a poor old widow woman !"

"What is it, dame ?" quoth Amyas, gently enough.

"Did you see my son to the Indies ?—my son Salvation ?"

"Salvation ?" replied he, with the air of one who recollected the name.

"Yes, sure, Salvation Yeo, of Clovelly."

Amyas recollected now. It was the name of the sailor who had given him the wondrous horn five years ago.

"My good dame," said he, "the Indies are a very large place, and your son may be safe and sound enough there, without my having seen him. I knew one Salvation Yeo. But he must have

come with——. By-the-bye, godfather, has Mr. Oxenham come home ? ”

There was a dead silence for a moment among the gentlemen round ; and then Sir Richard said solemnly, and in a low voice, turning away from the old dame,——

“ Amyas, Mr. Oxenham has not come home ; and from the day he sailed, no word has been heard of him, and all his crew.”

“ Oh, Sir Richard ! and you kept me from sailing with him ! Had I known this before I went into church, I had had one mercy more to thank God for.”

“ Thank Him all the more in thy life, my child ! ” whispered his mother.

“ And no news of him whatsoever ? ”

“ None ; but that the year after he sailed, a ship belonging to Andrew Barker, of Bristol, took out of a Spanish caravel, somewhere off the Honduras, his two brass guns ; but whence they came the Spaniard knew not, having bought them at Nombre de Dios.”

“ Yes ! ” cried the old woman ; “ they brought home the guns, and never brought home my boy ! ”

“ They never saw your boy, mother,” said Sir Richard.

“ But I’ve seen him ! I saw him in a dream four years last Whitsuntide, as plain as I see you now, gentles, a-lying upon a rock, calling for a drop of water to cool his tongue, like Dives to the torment ! Oh ! dear me ! ” and the old dame wept bitterly.

“ There is a rose noble for you ! ” said Mrs. Leigh.

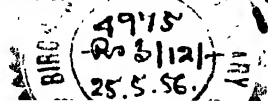
“ And there another ! ” said Sir Richard. And in a few minutes four or five gold coins were in her hand. But the old dame did but look wonderingly at the gold a moment, and then——

“ Ah ! dear gentles, God’s blessing on you, and Mr. Cary’s mighty good to me already ; but gold won’t buy back childer ! O ! young gentleman ! young gentleman ! make me a promise : bring me back my boy, if you find him sailing on the seas ! ”

Amyas promised—what else could he do ?—and the group hurried on ; but the lad’s heart was heavy in the midst of joy, with the thought of John Oxenham.

However, he was bound in all courtesy to turn his attention now to the show which had been prepared in his honour ; and which was really well enough worth seeing and hearing.

Amyas found it immensely entertaining and he would have thoroughly enjoyed it had he not been hoping all the time to catch a glimpse of Rose Salterne. During the years of his absence, she had grown into so beautiful a girl of eighteen, that half North Devon was mad about the “ Rose of Torridge,” as she was called



and there was not a young gallant for ten miles round (not to speak of her father's clerks and 'prentices, who moped about after her like so many Malvolios, and treasured up the very parings of her nails) who would not have gone to Jerusalem to win her. • But of all those not one would speak to the other. And poor Mr. Will Cary (who always blurted out the truth), when Old Salterne once asked him angrily, in Bideford Market, "What a plague business had he making sheep's eyes at his daughter?" broke out before all bystanders, "And what a plague business had you, old boy, to throw such an apple of discord into our merry meetings hereabouts? If you choose to have such a daughter, you must take the consequences, and be hanged to you." To which Mr. Salterne answered, with some truth, "That she was none of his choosing, nor of Mr. Cary's neither."

And now, to add to the general confusion, home was come young Amvas Leigh, more desperately in love with her than ever. For, as is the way with sailors (who after all are the truest lovers, as they are the finest fellows, God bless them, upon earth), his lonely ship-watches had been spent in imprinting on his imagination, month after month, year after year, every feature and gesture and tone of the fair lass whom he had left behind him; and that all the more intensely because, beside his mother, he had no one else to think of, and was as pure as the day he was born, having been trained as many a brave young man was then, to look upon profligacy not as a proof of manhood, but as a cowardly and effeminate sin.

CHAPTER III

OF TWO GENTLEMEN OF WALES, AND HOW THEY HUNTED WITH THE HOUNDS, AND YET RAN WITH THE DEER

AMVAS slept that night a tired and yet a troubled sleep, and his mother and Frank who had returned from his European travels more than a year ago, could see that his brain was busy with many dreams.

And no wonder; for over and above all the excitement of the day, the recollection of John Oxenham had taken strange possession of his mind; and all that evening, as he sat in the bay-windowed room Amvas was recalling to himself every look and gesture of the lost adventurer. At last he found himself, he knew not how, sailing westward ever, up the wake of the setting sun, in chase of a tiny sail, which was John Oxenham's. In his dreams, he saw from the yard-arm close above him, John

Oxenham's corpse looked down with grave-light eyes. And the corpse kept pointing back, and back, and looking at him with yearning eyes of agony, and lips which longed to tell some awful secret ; till he sprang up, and woke with a shout of terror, and found himself lying in the little coved chamber in dear old Burrough, with the grey autumn morning already stealing in.

Feverish and excited, he tried in vain to sleep again ; and after an hour's tossing, rose and dressed, and started for a bathe on his beloved old pebble ridge. As he passed his mother's door, he could not help looking in. The dim light of morning showed him the bed ; but its pillow had not been pressed that night. His mother, in her long white night-dress, was kneeling at the other end of the chamber at her prie-dieu, absorbed in devotion. Gently he slipped in without a word, and knelt down at her side. She turned, smiled, passed her arm around him, and went on silently with her prayers. Why not ? They were for him, and he knew it, and prayed also ; and his prayers were for her, and for poor lost John Oxenham, and all his vanished crew.

At last she rose and kissed him on the brow. Her little bare feet were peeping out from under her dress. He bent down, and kissed them again and again ; and then looking up, as if to excuse himself,—

“ You have such pretty feet, mother ! ”

Instantly, with a woman's instinct, she had hidden them.

“ Your dear father used to say so, thirty years ago.”

“ And I say so still : you always were beautiful ; you are beautiful now.”

“ What is that to you, silly boy ? Will you play the lover with an old mother ? Go and take your walk, and think of younger ladies, if you can find any worthy of you.”

And so the son went forth, and the mother returned to her prayers.

He walked down to the pebble ridge, he stripped and plunged into the breakers, and dived, and rolled, and tossed about the foam with stalwart arms, till he heard himself hailed from off the shore, and looking up, saw standing on the top of the rampart the tall figure of his cousin Eustace.

Amyas was half-disappointed at his coming. Nevertheless, not having seen Eustace for three years, it was but civil to scramble out and dress, while his cousin walked up and down upon the turf beside the beach.

Eustace Leigh was the son of a younger brother of Leigh of Burrough, who had more or less cut himself off from his family, and indeed from his countrymen, by remaining a Papist. One of

his children was Eustace Leigh, whom he had sent, giving the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul, to be made a liar at Rheims.

And a very fair liar he had become. He was now a tall, handsome, light-complexioned man, with a huge upright forehead, a very small mouth, and a dry and set expression of face.

He sat down beside Amyas on the pebbles, and looked at him all over out of the corners of his eyes very gently, as if he did not wish to hurt him, and Amyas faced right round, and looked him full in the face, with the heartiest of smiles, and held out a lion's paw, which Eustace took rapturously, and a great shaking of hands ensued ; Amyas asked " How is uncle ? "

Now, if there was one man on earth above another, of whom Eustace Leigh stood in dread, it was his cousin Amyas. In the first place, he knew Amyas could have killed him with a blow ; and next, he could not help feeling that Amyas despised him. They had not met for three years ; but before Amyas went to sea, Eustace never could argue with him ; simply because Amyas treated him as beneath argument.

There, dear readers, I cannot tire myself or you with any wire-drawn soul-dissections. I have tried to hint to you two opposite sorts of men. The one trying to be good with all his might and main, according to certain approved methods and rules, which he has got by heart. The other, not even knowing whether he is good or not, but just doing the right thing without thinking about it.

" Ah my dearest cousin ! " said Eustace, " how disappointed I was this morning at finding I had arrived just a day too late to witness your triumph ! But I hastened to your home as soon as I could, and learning from your mother that I should find you here, hurried down to bid you welcome again to Devon."

" Well, old lad, it does look very natural to see you. I often used to think of you whilst walking the deck o' nights. Uncle and the girls are all right, then ? But is the old pony dead yet ? "

" And you really thought of your poor cousin ? Be sure that he, too, thought of you, and offered up nightly his weak prayers for your safety to the saints."

" If they are half as good fellows as you and I take them for, they'll help me without asking."

" They have helped you, Amyas."

" Maybe ; I'd have done as much, I'm sure, for them if I'd been in their place."

" And do you not feel, then, that you owe a debt of gratitude to them ; and, above all, to her, whose intercessions have, I don't not, availed for your preservation ? "

"Humph!" said Amyas. "Here's Frank; let him answer."

And, as he spoke, up came Frank, and after due greetings, sat down beside them on the ridge.

"I say, brother, here's Eustace trying already to convert me; and telling me that I owe all my luck to the Blessed Virgin's prayers for me."

"It may be so," said Frank, not wishing to argue on religion.

Eustace smiled meekly: but continued somewhat venomously nevertheless,

"I, at least, am certain that I speak the truth, when I call my patroness a virgin undefiled."

Both the brother's brows clouded at once.

"Come," said Frank, "we will say no more. Walk round with us by Appledore, and then home to breakfast."

But Eustace declined, having immediate business, he said, in Northam town, and then in Bideford; and so left them to lounge for another half-hour on the beach.

Now Eustace Leigh, as we have seen, told his cousins that he was going to Northam: but he did not tell them that his point was, really the same as their own, namely, Appledore; and, therefore, after having satisfied his conscience by going as far as the very nearest house in Northam village, he struck away sharp to the left across the fields, whereby he went several miles out of his road; and also, as is the wont of crooked spirits, Jesuits especially, only outwitted himself. For his cousins going merrily, like honest men, along the straight road arrived in Appledore, opposite the little "Mariner's Rest" Inn, just in time to see what Eustace had taken so much trouble to hide from them, namely, four of Mr. Thomas Leigh's horses standing at the door, held by his groom, saddles and mail-bags on back, and mounting three of them, Eustace Leigh and two strange gentlemen.

"There's one he already this morning," growled Amyas; "he told us he was going to Northam."

As soon as they had ridden off, Amyas was not proof against the temptation of going over to the inn-door, and asking who were the gentlemen who went with Mr. Leigh.

"Gentlemen of Wales," said the ostler, "who came last night in a pinnace from Milford Haven, and their names, Mr. Morgan Evans and Mr. Evan Morgans."

In the meanwhile Messrs. Evans and Morgans were riding away, as fast as the rough by-lanes would let them, along the fresh coast of the bay, steering carefully clear of Northam town on the one hand, and on the other, of Portledge, where dwelt that most Protestant justice of the peace, Mr. Coffin.

But they were not destined to reach their point as peaceably as they could have wished. For just as they got opposite Clovelly Dike, the huge old Roman encampment which stands about mid-way in their journey, they heard a halloo from the valley below, answered by a fainter one far ahead. At which, like a couple of rogues (as indeed they were), Fa her Campian and Father Parsons looked at each other, and then both stared round at the wild, desolate, open pasture, (for the country was then all unenclosed), and the great dark furze-grown banks above their heads ; and Campian remarked gently to Parsons, that this was a very dreary spot, and likely enough for robbers.

Just then, a horseman dashed across the nose of Eustace Leigh's horse, with a "Hillo, old lad ! where ridest so early ?" and peering down for a moment into the ruts of the narrow track-way, struck spurs into his horse, shouting, "A freshet ? right away for Hartland ! Forward, gentleman all ! follow, follow, follow !"

"Who is this roysterer ?" asked Parsons, softly.

"Will Cary of Clovelly ; an awful heretic : and here come more behind."

Now riding on his quarter, not in the rough track-way like a cockney, but through the soft heather like a sportsman, was a very gallant knight whom we all know well by this time, Richard Grenville by name ; who had made Mr. Cary and the rest his guests the night before, and then ridden out with them at five o'clock that morning, after the wholesome early ways of the time, to rouse a well-known stag in the glens at Buckish, by help of Mr. Coffin's hounds from Portledge. Who pushed his horse alongside of Mr. Eustace Leigh, and at the first check said, with two low bows towards the two strangers—

"I hope Mr. Leigh will do me the honour of introduce me to his guests. I should be sorry, and Mr. Cary also, that all gentle strangers should become neighbours of ours, even for a day, without our knowing who they are who honour these parts with a visit ; and shewing them ourselves all due respect for the compliment of their presence."

After which, the only thing which poor Eustace could do, was to introduce in due form Mr. Evan Morgans and Mr. Morgan Evans, who, hearing the name, and what was worse, seeing the terrible face with its quiet searching eye, felt like a brace of partridge-poults cowering in the stubble, with a hawk hanging ten feet over their heads.

"Will !" said Sir Richard pushing alongside of young Cary. "Your worship ?"

"Jesuits, Will !"

"Shall I and young Coffin on and stop them ? Hard if the honest men may not rob the thieves once in a way."

"No ; give the devil rope, and he will hang himself. Keep thy tongue at home, and thine eyes too, Will."

"How then ?"

"Let Clovelly beach be watched night and day like any mouse-hole. No one can land round Harty Point with these south-westerns. Stop every fellow who has the ghost of an Irish brogue, come he in or go he out, and send him over to me."

"Some one should guard Bude haven, Sir."

"Leave that to me. Now then, forward, gentlemen all, or the stag will take the sea at the Abbey."

And on they crashed down the Hartland glens. But Eustace Leigh had other thoughts and other cares than the safety of his father's two mysterious guests, important as that was in his eyes ; for he was one of the many who had drunk in sweet poison (though in his case it could hardly be called sweet) from the magic glances of the Rose of Torridge.

CHAPTER IV

THE TWO WAYS OF BEING CROSSED IN LOVE

AND what all this while has become of the fair breaker of so many hearts ?

She was sitting in the little farm-house, beside the mill buried in the green depths of the Valley of Combe, half-way between Stow and Chapel, sulking as much as her sweet nature would let her, at being thus shut out from all the grand doings at Bideford. So lonely was she, in fact, that though she regarded Eustace Leigh with somewhat of aversion, and (being a good Protestant) with a great deal of suspicion, she could not find it in her heart to avoid a chat with him whenever he came down to the farm and to its mill, which he contrived to do almost every day. Her uncle and aunt at first looked stiff enough at these visits, and the latter took care always to make a third in every conversation ; and besides, the pretty maid had been wise enough to beg her aunt never to leave them alone,—for she "could not a-bear the sight of Mr. Eustace, only she must have some one to talk with down here." Eustace, in the meanwhile, who knew well that the difference in creed between him and Rose was likely to be the very hardest obstacle in the way of his love, took care to keep his private opinions well

in the background ; and instead of trying to convert the folk at the mill, daily bought milk or flour from them, and gave it away to the old women in Moorwinstow : and at last, having taken counsel with Campian and Parsons on certain political plots then on foot, came with them to the conclusion that they would all three go to Church the next Sunday. Where Messrs. Evan Morgans and Morgan Evans behaved themselves in a most orthodox and unexceptionable manner ; as did also poor Eustace who then went home flattering himself that he had taken in parson, clerk, and people ; not knowing in his simple unsimplicity, and cunning foolishness, that each good wife in the parish was saying to the other, " He turned Protestant ? The devil turned monk ! He's only after Mistress Salterne, the young hypocrite."

But if the two Jesuits found it expedient, for the holy cause in which they were embarked, to reconcile themselves outwardly to the powers that were, they were none the less busy in private in plotting their overthrow.

Ever since April last they had been lying quiet un-expected news from Ireland should give them their cue, and a great " rising of the west " should sweep from her throne that stiff-necked, persecuting, excommunicate, reprobate, and profligate usurper who, falsely called herself the Queen of England.

One day, indeed, as Eustace entered his father's private room, after his usual visit to the mill, he could hear voices high in dispute ; Parsons as usual, blustering ; Mr. Leigh peevishly deprecating, and Campian, who was really the sweetest-natured of men, trying to pour oil on the troubled waters. Whereat Eustace (for the good of the cause, of course) stopped outside and listened.

" My excellent Sir," said Mr. Leigh, " does not your very presence here show how I am affected toward the holy cause of the Catholic faith ? But I cannot in the meanwhile forget that I am an Englishman."

" And what is England ?" said Parsons : " A heretic and schismatic Babylon. Yea, what is a country ? An arbitrary division of territory by the princes of this world, who are nought, and come to nought."

" My dear Sir, recollect that I have sworn allegiance to Queen Elizabeth !"

" Yes, Sir, you have, Sir ; and, as I have shown at large in my writings, you were absolved from that allegiance from the moment that the bull of Pius the Fifth declared her a heretic and excommunicate, and thereby to have forfeited all dominion whatsoever. I tell you, Sir, rebellion is now not merely permitted, it is a duty."

" For heaven's sake, do not talk so, Sir ! or I must leave the

room. Our Queen is a very good Queen, if Heaven would but grant her repentance, and turn her to the true faith. I have never been troubled about religion, nor any one else that I know of in the west country."

"You forget, Mr. Trudgeon of Launceston, father, and poor Father Mayne," interposed Eustace, who had now slipped in.

"What, young malapert?" cried poor Leigh, facing round upon his son, glad to find any one on whom he might vent his ill-humour; "are you, too, against me? And pray, what the devil brought Cuthbert Mayne to the gallows, and turned Mr. Trudgeon (he was always a foolish hot-head) out of house and home, but just such treasonable talk as Mr. Parsons must needs hold in my house, to make a beggar of me and my children, as he will before he has done?"

"The blessed Virgin forbid!" said Campian.

But this did not smooth matters: indeed, the argument grew more bitter with each sentence. Then Eustace spoke: "All are not fit for the Kingdom of God: of which high honour I have for some time past felt myself unworthy. I have much doubt just now as to my vocation; and in the meanwhile have not forgotten that I am a citizen of a free country." And so saying, he took his father's arm, and walked out.

His last words had hit the Jesuits hard. They had never learnt the lesson, that all their scholastic cunning, plotting, intriguing, bulls, pardons, indulgencies, and the rest of it, are, on this side the Channel, a mere enchanter's cloud-castle which vanishes into empty air by one touch of that magic phrase, "A citizen of a free country!" They looked at each other in more utter perplexity than ever. At last Parsons spoke.

"There's a woman in the wind. I'll lay my life on it. I saw him blast up crimson yesterday, when his mother asked him whether Rose Salterne was still in the neighbourhood."

"A woman? Well, the spirit may be willing, though the flesh be weak. We will inquire into this. The youth may do us good service as a layman; and if anything should happen to his elder brother (whom the saints protect!) he is heir to some wealth."

The upshot of this conversation was, that in a day or two (during which time Mr. Leigh and Eustace also had made the *amende honorable* and matters went smoothly enough) Father Campian asked Father Francis the household chaplain to allow him, as an especial favour, to hear Eustace's usual confession on the ensuing Friday.

Poor Father Francis dared not refuse so great a man; and, of course, Campian found out from him that he was in love.

At last, when Campian, asked something about her worldly wealth, Eustace saw a door of escape and sprang at it.

"Even if she be a heretic, she is heiress to one of the wealthiest merchants in Devon."

"Ah!" said Campian, thoughtfully. "And she is but eighteen, you say?"

"Only eighteen."

"Ah! well, my son, there is time. She may be reconciled to the Church: or you may change."

"I shall die first."

"Ah, poor lad! Well, she may be reconciled, and her wealth may be of use to the cause of heaven."

"And it shall be of use. Only absolve me, and let me be at peace. Let me have but her," he cried piteously. "I do not want her wealth—not I! Let me have but her, and all the rest—money, fame, talents, yea, my life itself, hers if it be needed—are at the service of Holy Church."

And so Eustace was absolved; after which Campian added—

"This is indeed well, my son; for there is a thing to be done now, but it may be at the risk of life."

"Prove me!" cried Eustace impatiently.

"Here is a letter which was brought me last night, and I longed to have shown it you, but I feared my son had been—"

"You feared wrongly, then, my dear Father Campian."

So Campian translated to him the cipher of the letter.

"This to Evan Morgans, gentleman, at Mr. Leigh's house in Moorwinstow, Devonshire. News may be had by one who will go to the shore of Clovelly, any evening after the 25th of November, at dead low-tide, and there watch for a boat, rowed by one with a red beard, and a Portugal by his speech. If he be asked 'How many?' he will answer, 'Eight hundred and one.' Take his letters and read them. If the shore be watched, let him who comes show a light three times in a safe place under the cliff above the town; below is dangerous landing. Farewell, and expect great things!"

"I will go," said Eustace; "to-morrow is the 25th, and I know a sure and easy place. Your friend seems to know these shores well."

"Ah! what is it we do not know?" said Campian, with a mysterious smile. "And now?"

"And now, to prove to you how I trust to you, you shall come with me, and see this—the lady of whom I spoke, and judge for yourself whether my fault is not a venial one."

"Ah, my son, have I not absolved you already? What have I

to do with fair faces ? Nevertheless, I will come, both to show you that I trust you and it may be to help towards reclaiming a heretic, and saving a lost soul : who knows ?”

So the two set out together ; and, as it was appointed, they met none other than Mistress Rose Salterne herself. Up to them she tripped on tiny feet, tall, lithe, and graceful, a true West-country lass. As she passed them with a pretty blush and courtesy even Campian looked back at the fair innocent creature.

Eustace darted from his side, and running across a field, met Rose full at the next turn of the road.

She started, and gave a pretty little shriek.

“Mr. Leigh ! I thought you had gone forward.”

“I came back to speak to you, Rose—Mistress Salterne, I mean.”

“To me ?”

“To you I must speak, tell you all, or die !” And he pressed up close to her. She shrank back somewhat frightened.

“Do not stir ; do not go, I implore you ! Rose, only hear me !” And fiercely and passionately seizing her by the hand, he poured out the whole story of his love, heaping her with every fantastic epithet of admiration which he could devise.

“Let me go !” she said ; “you are too rough, Sir !”

“Ay !” he said, seizing now both her hands, “rougher, perhaps, than the gay gallants of Bideford, who serenade you, and write sonnets to you, and send you posies. Rougher, but more loving, Rose ! Do not turn away ! I shall die if you take your eyes off me ! Tell me—tell me, now here—this moment—before we part—if I may love you !”

“Go away !” she answered, struggling, and bursting into tears. “This is too rude. Leave me ; go ! or I will call for help !”

“Yes, proud woman ! I thought so ! Some one of those gay gallants has been beforehand with me. Tell me who—”

But she broke from him, and passed him, and fled down the lane.

“Mark it !” cried he, after her. “You shall rue the day when you despised Eustace Leigh !” And he turned back to join Campian, who stood in some trepidation. Eustace Leigh had played his move, and lost it.

Poor little Rose, having run nearly to Chapel, stopped for very shame, and walked quietly by the cottages which stood opposite the gate, and then turned up the lane towards Moorwinstow village, whither she was bound. But on second thoughts, she felt herself so “red and flustered,” that she was afraid of going into

the village, for fear of making people talk, and so, turning into a by-path, struck away toward the cliffs, to cool her blushes in the sea breeze.

Rose Saltérne was a thorough specimen of a West-coast maiden, full of passionate impulsive affections, and wild dreamy imaginations. Left early without a mother's care, she had fed her fancy upon the legends and ballads of her native land, till she believed of mermaids and pixies, charms and witches, dreams and omens, and all that world of magic.

Rose was not only well aware that she was wooed, but found the said wooing a very pleasant process. Not that she had any wish to break hearts : she did not break her heart for any of her admirers, and why should they break theirs for her ? They were all very charming, each in his way.

Of course, Mr. Frank Leigh was the most charming ; but then, as a courtier and squire of dames, he had never given her a sign of real love.

And very charming was Mr. William Cary, with his quips and his jests, and his galliards and lavoltas ; over and above his rich inheritance. But then, charming also Mr. Coffin, of Portledge, though he were a little proud and stately.

Then, there was Amyas Leigh. Ah, poor Amyas ! Her girl's fancy for him had vanished. But still, she could not help thinking a good deal about him, and his voyage, and the reports of his great strength, and beauty, and valour, which had already reached her in that out-of-the-way corner ; and though she was not in the least in love with him, she could not help hoping that he had at least not altogether forgotten her.

Poor little Rose ! Had she but had a mother ! But she was to learn her lesson, such as it was, in another school. She was too shy to tell her aunt her mighty troubles ; but a counsellor she must have. She would go and see Lucy Passmore, the white witch ; Lucy knew everything ; Lucy would tell her what to do ; perhaps even whom to marry.

Lucy was a fat jolly woman of fifty, with little pig-eyes, which twinkled like sparks of fire, and eyebrows which sloped upwards and outwards like those of a satyr. Her qualifications as white witch were boundless cunning, equally boundless good nature, considerable knowledge of human weaknesses, and the faculty of holding her tongue.

Lucy welcomed Rose with endless courtesies, and—" Bless my dear soul alive, who ever would have thought to see the Rose of Torridge so my poor little place ! "

Rose sat down.

"Well my dear young lady," said Lucy, "what it is I can do for ye ? For I guess you want a bit of old Lucy's help, eh ? Though I'm most mazed to see ye here, surely. I should have supposed that pretty face could manage they sort of matters for itself. Eh ?"

Rose, thus bluntly charged, confessed at once that she wanted "To have her fortune told."

"Eh ? Oh ? I see. The pretty face has managed it a bit too well already, eh ? Tu many o'mun, pure fellows ? Well, tain't every mayden has her pick and choose, like some I know of, as be blest in love by stars above. So you h'aint made up your mind, then ?"

Rose shook her head.

"Ah—well," she went on, in a half bantering tone. "Not so asy, is it, then ? One's gude for one thing, and one for another, eh ? One has the blood, and another the money."

Rose sighed and stirred the ashes about vehemently.

"I must first know wlio it is to be. If you could show me that—now—"

"Ou, I can show ye that, tu, I can. Ben there's a way to 't, a sure way ; but 'tis mortal cold for the time o' year, you see."

"But what is it, then ?" said Rose.

"Why, you'm not afraid to goe into the say by night for a minute, are you ? And to-morrow night would serve, too ; 'twill be just low tide to midnight."

"If you would come with me, perhaps—"

"I'll come, I'll come, and stand with'n call, to be sure. Only do ye mind this, dear soul alive, not to goe telling a crumb about mun, noo, not for the world, or yu'll see nought at all, indeed, now. And beside, there's a noxious business grow'd up against me up to Chapel there ; and I hear tell how Mr. Leigh saith I shall to Exeter for a witch—did ye ever hear the likes ?"

Rose could not resist the temptation ; and between them both the charm was agreed on, and the next night was fixed for its trial.

But in the meanwhiie, at the very hour that Eustace had been prosecuting his suit in the lane at Moorwinstow, a very different scene was being enacted in Mrs. Leigh's room at Burrough.

For the night before, Amyas, as he was going to bed, heard his brother Frank in the next room tune his lute, and then begin to sing.

At which the simple sailor sighed, and longed that he could write such neat verses, and sing them so sweetly. How he would besiege the ear of Rose Salterne with amorous ditties !

In the end he stole into his brother's room and began chatting about his travels. But somehow, every story which he tried to tell came round, by crooked paths, yet sure, to none other point than Rose Salterne, and how he thought of her here, and thought of her there, and how he wondered what she would say if she had seen him in this adventure, and how he longed to have had her with him to show her that glorious sight, till Frank let him have his own way, and then out came the whole story of the simple fellow's daily and hourly devotion to her, through those three long years of world-wide wanderings.

"And lo, Frank, I could hardly think of anything but her in the church, the other day God forgive me ! and it did seem so hard for her to be the only face which I did not see—and have not seen her yet, either."

"So I thought, dear lad," said Frank, with one of his sweetest smiles.

"And is she as pretty as ever ?"

"Ten times as pretty, dear lad, as half the young fellows round have discovered. If you mean to win her and wear her, you will have rivals enough to get rid of."

"Humph !" said Amyas, "I hope I shall not have to make short work with some of them."

"I hope not," said Frank laughing. "Now go to bed, and tomorrow morning give your sword to mother to keep, lest you should be tempted to draw it on any of her Majesty's lieges."

"No fear of that, Frank."

And the giant swung himself laughing out of the room, and slept all night like a seal, not without dreams, of course, of Rose Salterne.

The next morning, according to his wont, he went into his mother's room, whom he was sure to find up, and at her prayers; for he liked to say his prayers, too, by her side, as he used to do when he was a little boy. But coming gently to the door, for fear of disturbing her, and entering unperceived, beheld a sight which stopped him short.

Mrs. Leigh was sitting in her chair, with her face bowed fondly down upon the head of his brother Frank, who knelt before her, his face buried in her lap. Amyas could see that his whole form was quivering with stifled emotion.

"And yet," said Frank, after a moment's silence, "has He not heaped me with blessings enough already, that I must repine and rage at His refusing me one more, even though that one be—No, mother ! I am your son, and God's ; and you shall know it, even though Amyas never does !" And he looked up with his

clear blue eyes and white forehead ; and his face was as the face of an angel.

Both of them saw that Amyas was present, and started and blushed. His mother motioned him away with her eyes, and he went quietly out, as one stunned. Why had his name been mentioned ?

Love, cunning love, told him all at once. His brother was his rival. And he had been telling him all his love last night. What a stupid brute he was ! How it must have made poor Frank wince ! And then Frank had listened so kindly ; even bid him God Speed in his suit. What a gentleman old Frank was, to be sure. No wonder the Queen was so fond of him, and all the court ladies ! Amyas strode and tramped up and down the shell-paved garden walks for a full half-hour, till Frank's voice (as cheerful as ever, though he more than suspected all) called him.

"Come in, to breakfast lad ; and stop grinding and creaking upon those miserable limpets, before thou hast set every tooth in my head on edge !"

After breakfast, Amyas said : "Look here, brother Frank ! I've thought it all over in the garden ; and I was an ass and a braggart for talking to you as I did last night. Of course you love her ! Everybody must ; and I was a fool for not recollecting that ; and if you love her, your taste and mine agree, and what can be better ? I think you are a sensible fellow for loving her, and you think me one. And as for who has her, why, you're the elder ; and first come first served is the rule, and best to keep to it. Besides, brother Frank, though I'm no scholar, yet I'm not so blind but that I tell the difference between you and me ; and of course your chance against mine, for a hundred to one ; and I am not going to be fool enough to row against wind and tide too. I'm good enough for her, I hope ; but if I am, you are better, and the good dog may run, but it's the best that takes the hare ; and so I have nothing more to do with the matter at all ; and if you marry her, why, it will set the old house on its legs again, and that's the first thing to be thought of, and you may just as well do it as I, and better too. Not but that it's a plague, a horrible plague !" went on Amyas, with a ludicrously doleful visage ; "but so are other things too, by the dozen ; it's all in the day's work, as the huntsman said when the lion ate him. What must be must. So I'll go and join the army in Ireland, and get it out of my head, for cannon balls fright away love as well as poverty does ; and that's all I've got to say."

"Amyas ! Amyas !" said Frank, "you must not throw away the hopes of years, and for me, too !"

My children, my children, which of you shall I love best ? Which of you is the more noble ? I thanked God this morning for hāving given me one such son : but to have found that I possess two ! ” And Mrs. Leigh laid her head on the table, and in her hands.

CHAPTER V

CLOVELLY COURT IN THE OLDEN TIME

THE next morning, Amyas Leigh was not to be found and his mother sent Frank to find him. Frank discovered his brother at Will Cary’s house. The three sat down to a meal, whereon Will Cary, drawing his chair close to Frank’s, put quietly into his hand a dirty letter.

“ This was a letter left for me,” whispered he, “ by a country fellow this morning. Look at it, and tell me what I am to do.”

Whereon Frank opened, and read—

Mr. Cary, be you wary,
By deer park end to-nigh.,
Yf Irish flaxe com out of rocks
Grip and hold hym tight.”

“ I would have showed it my father,” said Will, “ but —”

“ I verily believe it to be a blind. See now, this is the hand-writing of a man who has been trying to write vilely, and yet cannot. Look at that B, and that G. And what is more, this is no Devon man’s handiwork. We say ‘ to,’ and not ‘ by,’ Will eh ? in the West country ? ”

“ Of course.”

“ And ‘ man,’ instead of ‘ him ’ ? ”

“ True, O Daniel ! But am I to do nothing therefore .

“ On that matter I am no judge. Let us ask much-enduring Ulysses here ; perhaps he has not sailed round the world without bringing home a device or two.”

Whereon Amyas was called to counsel.

Amyas pondered awhile, thrusting his hands into his long curls ; and then—

“ Will, my lad, have you been watching at the Deer Park End of late ? ”

“ Never.”

“ Where, then ? ”

“ At the town-beach.”

"Where else ?"

"At the town-head."

"Where else ?"

"Why, the fellow is turned lawyer ! Above Freshwater."

"Where is Freshwater ?"

"Why, where the waterfall comes over the cliff, half-a-mile from the town. There is a path there up into the forest."

"I know. I'll watch there to-night. Do you keep all your old haunts, safe, of course, and send a couple of stout knaves to the mill, to watch the beach at the Deer Park End, on the chance ; for your poet may be a true man, after all. But my heart's faith is, that this comes just to draw you off from some old beat of yours, upon a wild-geese chase."

"But why are you so ready to watch Freshwater to-night, Master Amyas ?"

"Because, Sir, those who come, if they come, will never land at Mouthmill ; if they are strangers, they dare not ; and if they are bay's-men, they are too wise, as long as the westerly swell sets in. As for landing at the town, that would be too great a risk ; but Freshwater is as lonely as the Bermudas ; and they can beach a boat up under the cliff at all tides, and in all weathers, except north and nor'-west. I have done it many a time, when I was a boy."

"I verily believe you are right. Who will you take with you to watch ?"

"Sir, said Frank, "I will go with my brother ; and that will be enough."

"Enough ? He is big enough, and you brave enough, for ten ; but still, the more the merrier."

"But the fewer, the better fare. If I might ask a first and last favour," said Frank, very earnestly, "you would grant me two things : that you would let none go to Freshwater but me and my brother ; and that whatsoever we shall bring you back, shall be kept a secret. I trust that we are not so unknown to you, that you can doubt for a moment but that whatsoever we may do will satisfy at once your honour and our own."

"My dear young gentleman, there is no need of so many courtier's words. I am your father's friend, and yours. And God forbid that a Cary—for I guess your drift—should ever wish to make a head or a heart ache ; that is, more than—"

Few more words were exchanged till the two brothers were safe outside the house ; and then—

"Ar yas," said Frank, "that was a Devon man's handiwork, nevertheless : it was Eustace's handwriting."

"Impossible !"

"No, lad. I have been secretary to a prince, and learnt to interpret cipher, and to watch every pen-stroke ; and I am not easily deceived.. Would God I were ! Come on, lad ; and strike no man hastily, lest thou cut off thine own flesh."

By the side of the waterfall a narrow path climbs upward from the beach ; and here it was that the two brothers expected to meet the messenger.

Frank insisted on taking his station below Amyas. He said that he was certain that Eustace himself would make his appearance, and that he was more fit than Amyas to bring him to reason by parley ; that if Amyas would keep watch some twenty yards above, the escape of the messenger would be impossible.

So Amyas took his station under a high marl bank, and, bedded in luxuriant crown-ferns, kept his eye steadily on Frank, who sat down on a little knoll of rock which parts the path and the dark chasm down which the stream rushes to its final leap over the cliff.

There Amyas sat a full half-hour. Outside the south-west wind blew fresh and strong, and the moonlight danced upon a thousand crests of foam. Suddenly, Amyas saw, with a beating heart, a large two-masted vessel lying-to—that must be the "Portugal !" Eagerly he looked up the glen, and listened ; but he heard nothing.

At last he heard a rustle of the fallen leaves ; he shrank closer and closer into the darkness of the bank. Then swift light steps—not down the path, from above, but upward, from below ; his heart beat quick and loud. And in another half-minute a man came in sight, within three yards of Frank's hiding-place.

Frank sprang out instantly. Amyas saw his bright black glance in the clear October moonlight.

"Stand, in the Queen's name !"

The man drew a pistol from under his cloak, and fired full in his face. Had it happened in these days, Frank's chance had been small ; but to get a ponderous wheel-lock under weigh was a longer business, and before the fizzing of the flint had ceased, Frank had struck up the pistol with his rapier, and it exploded harmlessly over his head. The man instantly dashed the weapon in his face, and closed.

The blow, luckily, did not take effect on that delicate forehead, but struck him in the shoulder : nevertheless, Frank, who with all his grace and agility was as fragile as a lily, and before he could recover himself, Amyas saw a dagger gleam, and one, two, three blows fiercely repeated.

Mad with fury, he was with them in an instant. They were scuffling together so closely in the shade that he was afraid to use his sword point ; but with the hilt he dealt a single blow full on the ruffian's cheek. It was enough ; with a hideous shriek, the fellow rolled over at his feet, and Amyas set his foot on him, in act to run him through.

" Stop ! stay ! " almost screamed Frank ; " it is Eustace ! our cousin Eustace ! " and he leant against a tree.

Amyas sprang towards him : but Frank waved him off.

" It is nothing—a scratch. He has papers : I am sure of it. Take them ; and for God's sake let him go ! "

" Villain ! give me your papers ! " cried Amyas, setting his foot once more on the writhing Eustace, whose jaw was broken across.

Eustace was usually no craven : but he was cowed. Between agony and shame, he had no heart to resist. He shuddered, pulled a packet from his bosom, and threw it from him, murmuring, " I have not given it."

" Swear to me that these are all the papers which you have, in cipher or out of cipher. Swear on your soul, or you die ! "

Eustace swore.

" Tell me, who are your accomplices ? "

" Never ! " said Eustace. " Cruel ! have you not degraded me enough already ? "

One hint of honour made Amyas as gentle as a lamb. He lifted Eustace up, and bade him run for his life.

" I am to owe my life, then, to you ? "

" Not in the least ; only to your being a Leigh. Go, or it will be worse for you ! " And Eustace went ; while Amyas, catching up the precious packet, hurried to Frank. He had fainted, already, and his brother had to carry him as far as the park.

Half-an-hour after, Amyas, Mr. Cary, and his son George were in deep consultation over the following epistle, the only paper in the packet which was not in cipher :—

" ✠ DEAR BROTHER N. *S. in Ch^o et Ecclesia.*

" This is to inform you, and the friends of the cause, that S. Josephus has landed in Smerwick, with eight hundred valiant Crusaders, burning with holy zeal to imitate last year's martyrs of Carrigfolium, and to expiate their offences (which I fear may have been many) by the propagation of our most holy faith. I have purified the fort (which they are strenuously rebuilding) with prayer and holy water, from the stain of heretical footsteps, and consecrated it afresh to the service of Heaven, as the first-fruits of the isle of saints ; and having displayed the consecrated

banner to the adoration of the faithful, have returned to Earl Desmond, that I may establish his faith, weak as yet, by reason of the allurements of this world : though since, by the valour of his brother James, he that hindered was taken out of the way (I mean Davils the heretic, sacrifice well-pleasing in the eyes of Heaven !), the young man has lent a more obedient ear to my counsels. If you can do anything, do it quickly, for a great door and effectual is opened, and there are many adversaries. But be swift, for so do the poor lambs of the Church tremble at the fury of the heretics, that a hundred will flee before one Englishman.

"If any devout lady shall so will, you may obtain from her liberality a shirt for this worthless tabernacle, and also a pair of hose ; for I am unsavoury to myself and to others, and of such luxuries none here has superfluity ; for all live in holy poverty, except the fleas, who have that consolation in this world for which this unhappy nation, and those who labour among them, must wait till the world to come.

"Your loving brother,
"N.S."

"Sir Richard must know of this before day-break," cried old Cary. "Eight hundred men landed ! We must call out the Posse Comitatus, and sail with them bodily. I will go myself, old as I am. Spaniards in Ireland ? not a dog of them must go home again."

"Not a dog of them," answered Will ; "but where is Mr. Winter and his squadron ?"

"Safe in Milford Haven ; a messenger must be sent to him too."

"I'll go," said Amyas : "but Mr. Cary is right. Sir Richard must know all first."

"And we must have those Jesuits."

"What ? Mr. Evans and Mr. Morgans ? God help us—they are at my uncle's ! Consider the honour of our family !"

"Judge for yourself, my dear boy," said old Mr. Cary, gently : "would it not be rank treason to let these foxes escape, while we have this damning proof against them ?"

And the jolly old man bustled them out of the house and into their saddles, under the broad bright winter's moon.

"You must make your pace, lads, or the moon will be down before you are over the moors." And so away they went.

Neither of them spoke for many a mile. Amyas, because his mind was fixed firmly on the one object of saving the honour of his

house ; and Will, because he was hesitating between Ireland and the wars, and Rose Salterne and love-making.

At three in the morning they arrived at their destination.

Sir Richard, in his long gown, was soon downstairs in the hall the letter read, and the story told ; but ere it was half finished—

“Anthony, call up a groom, and let him bring me a horse round. Gentlemen, if you will excuse me five minutes, I shall be at your service.”

“You will not go alone, Richard ?” asked Lady Grenville, putting her beautiful face in its nightcap out of an adjoining door.

“Surely, sweet chuck, we three are enough to take two poor polecats of Jesuits. Go in, and help me to boot and gird.”

In half an hour they had reached Uncle Leigh’s house.

“Mr. Cary, there is a back path across the downs to Marsland ; go and guard that,” said Sir Richard. He knocked on the door and, while waiting for an answer, Amyas said—

“My wretched cousin, Sir, may not have returned—and I might watch for him on the main road—unless you want me with you.”

“Richard Grenville can walk alone, lad. But what will you do with your cousin ?”

“Send him out of the country, never to return ; or if he refuses, run him through on the spot.”

“Go, lad.” And as he spoke, a sleepy voice asked inside the gate, “Who was there ?”

“Sir Richard Grenville. Open, in the Queen’s name !”

“Sir Richard ? He is in bed, and he’s hanged to you. No honest folk come at this hour of night.”

“Amyas !” shouted Sir Richard. Amyas rode back.

“Burst that gate for me, while I hold your horse.”

Amyas leaped down and took up a rock from the roadside. In an instant the door was flat on the ground, and the serving-man on his back inside, while Sir Richard quietly entering over it told the fellow to get up and hold his horse for him (which the clod, who knew well enough that terrible voice, did without further murmurs), and then strode straight to the front door. It was already opened. The household had been up and about all along, or the noise at the entry had aroused them.

Sir Richard knocked, however, at the open door ; and, to his astonishment, his knock was answered by Mr. Leigh himself, fully dressed, and candle in hand.

“Sir Richard Grenville ! What, Sir ! is this neighbourly, not to say gentle, to break into my house in the dead of night ?”

“I broke your outer door, Sir, because I was refused entrance

when I asked in the Queen's name. I knocked at your inner one, as I should have knocked at the poorest cottager's in the parish, because I found it open. You have two Jesuits here, Sir ! and here is the Queen's warrant for apprehending them. I have signed it with my own hand, and, moreover, serve it now with my own hand, in order to save you scandal—and it may be, worse. I must have these men, Mr. Leigh."

"My dear Sir Richard !——"

"I must have them, or I must search the house ; and you would not put either yourself or me to so shameful a necessity ?"

"My dear Sir Richard !——"

"My dear Mr. Leigh," said Sir Richard, as blandly as ever, "where are my men ? The night is cold ; and you, as well as I, need to be in our beds."

"The men, Sir Richard—the Jesuits—they are not here, indeed."

"Not here, Sir ?"

"On the word of a gentleman, they left my house an hour ago. Believe me, Sir, they did. I will swear to you, if you need."

"I believe Mr. Leigh of Chapel's word without oaths. Whither are they gone ?"

"Nay, Sir—how can I tell ? they are—they are, as I may say, fled, Sir ; escaped."

"With your connivance ; at least with your son's. Where are they gone ?"

"As I live, I do not know."

"My Leigh—is this possible ? Can you add untruth to that reason from the punishment of which I am trying to shield you ?"

Poor Mr. Leigh burst into tears.

"Oh ! my God ! my God ! is it come to this ? Over and above having the fear and anxiety of keeping these black rascals in my house, and having to stop their villainous motions every minute, for fear they should hang me and themselves, I am to be called a traitor and a liar in my old age, and that, too, by Richard Grenville ! Would God I had never been born ! Would God I had no soul to be saved, and I'd just go and drown care in drink, and let the Queen and the Pope fight it out their own way !" And the poor old man sank into a chair, and covered his face with his hands, and then leaped up again.

"Bless my heart ! Excuse me, Sir Richard—to sit down and leave you standing. Sit down, my dear Sir ! or rather, come with me into my room, and hear a poor wretched man's story, for I swear before God the men are fled ; and my poor boy Eustace is not home either ; and the groom tells me that his devil of a

cousin has broken his jaw for him ; and his mother is all but mad this hour past. Good lack ! good lack ! ”

“ He nearly murdered his angel of a cousin, Sir ! ” said Sir Richard severely.

“ What, Sir ? They never told me, ”

“ He had stabbed his cousin Frank three times, Sir, before Amyas, who is as noble a lad as walks God’s earth, struck him down. And in defence of what, forsooth, did he play the ruffian and the swashbuckler, but to bring home to your house this letter. Sir, which you shall hear at your leisure, the moment I have taken order about your priests. ” And walking out of the house, he went round and called to Cary to come to him.

“ The birds are flown, Will, ” whispered he. “ There is but one chance for us, and that is Marsland Mouth. If they are trying to take boat there, you may be yet in time. If they are gone inland, we can do nothing till we raise the hue and cry to-morrow. ”

And Will galloped off over the downs toward Marsland, while Sir Richard ceremoniously walked in again, and professed himself ready and happy to have the honour of an audience in Mr. Leigh’s private chamber. And as we know pretty well already what was to be discussed therein, we had better go over to Marsland Mouth, and, if possible, arrive there before Will Cary ; seeing that he arrived hot and swearing, half an hour too late.

CHAPTER VI

THE COOMBS OF THE FAR WEST

IN only one of these North Devonshire coves or “ Mouths ” is a landing for boats possible ; and that Mouth is Marsland, the abode of the White Witch, Lucy Passmore ; whither, as Sir Richard Grenville rightly judged, the Jesuits were gone. But before the Jesuits came, two other persons were standing on that lonely beach, under the bright October moon, namely, Rose Salterne, and the White Witch herself ; for Rose, fevered with curiosity and superstition, and allured by the very wildness and possible danger of the spell, had kept her appointment ; and, a few minutes before midnight, stood on the grey shingle beach with her counsellor.

“ You be safe enough here to-night, Miss. My old man is snoring sound abed, and there’s no other soul ever sets foot here o’ nights, except it be the mermaids now and then. Goodness Father, where’s our boat ? It ought to be up here on the pebbles. ”

Rose pointed to a strip of sand some forty yards nearer the sea, where the boat lay.

"Oh, the lazy old villain ! he's been round the rocks after pollock this evening, and never taken the trouble to hale the boat up."

And the good wife bustled down toward the boat, with Rose behind her.

"Iss, 'tis fast, sure enough : and the oars aboard too ! Well, I never ! Oh, the lazy thief, to leave they here to be stole ! I'll just sit in the boat, dear, and watch mun, while you go down to the say : for you must be all alone to yourself, you know, or you'll see nothing. There's the looking-glass ; now go, and dip your head three times, and mind you don't look to land or sea, before you've said the words, and looked upon the glass. Now, be quick, it's just upon midnight."

And she coiled herself up in the boat, while Rose went faltering down the strip of sand some twenty yards further, and there slipping off her clothes, stood shivering and trembling for a moment before she entered the sea.

The breeze had died away ; not even a rafter broke the perfect stillness of the cove. If she performed the rite duly, nothing would harm her ; but she could hear the beating of her own heart, as she stepped, mirror in hand, into the cold water, waded hastily, as far as she dare, and then stopped aghast.

A ring of flame was round her waist ; every limb was bathed in lambent light ; all the multitudinous life of the autumn sea, stirred by her approach, had flashed suddenly into glory. She could see every shell which crawled on the white sand at her feet. She turned to flee : but she had gone too far now to retreat ; hastily dipping her head three times, she hurried out to the sea-marge, and looking through her dripping locks at the magic mirror, pronounced the incantation—

"A maiden pure, here I stand,
Neither on sea nor yet on land ;
Angels watch me on either hand.
If you be landsman come down the strand,
If you be sailor, come up the sand ;
If you be angel, come from the sky,
Look in my glass and pass me by.
Look in my glass, and go from the shore ;
Leave me, but love me for evermore.

The incantation was hardly finished ; her eyes were straining into the mirror, where, as may be supposed, nothing appeared but the sparkle of the drops from her own tresses, when she heard rattling down the pebbles the hasty feet of men and horses.

She darted into a cavern off the high rock, and hastily dressed herself : the steps held on right to the boat. Peeping out, half-dead with terror, she saw there four men, two of whom had just leaped from their horses, and turning them adrift, began to help the other two in running the boat down,

Whereon, out of the stern sheets, arose, like an angry ghost, the portly figure of Lucy Passmore, and shrieked in shrillest treble—

“ Eh ? ye villains, ye roogs, what do ye want staling poor folks, boats by night like this ? ”

The whole party recoiled in terror, and one turned to run up the beach, shouting at the top of his voice, “ ’Tis a marmaiden—a marmaiden asleep in Willy Passmore’s boat ! ”

“ I wish it were any sich good luck,” she could hear Will say ; “ ’tis my wife, oh dear ! ” and he covered down, expecting the hearty cuff which he received duly, as the White Witch, leaping out of the boat, dared any man to touch it, and thundered to her husband to go home to bed.

The wily dame, as Rose well guessed, was keeping up this delay chiefly to gain time for her pupil : but she had also more solid reasons for making the fight as hard as possible ; for she, as well as Rose, had already discerned in the ungainly figure of one of the party, the same suspicious Welsh gentleman, on whose calling she had divined long ago ; and she was so loyal a subject as to hold in extreme horror her husband’s meddling with such “ Popish skulkers,” (as she called the whole party roundly to their face,)—unless on consideration of a very handsome sum of money. In vain Parsons thundered, Campian entreated, Mr. Leigh’s groom swore, and her husband danced round in an agony of mingled fear and covetousness.

“ No,” she cried, “ as I am an honest woman and loyal ! This is why you left the boat down to the shoore, you old traitor, you, is it ? ”

“ Lucy, Lucy ! ” shrieked her husband, “ Be you mazed, lass ? They promised me two gold nobles before I’d lend them the boot ! ”

“ Tu ? ” shrieked the matron, with a tone of ineffable scorn. “ And do yu call yourself a man ? ”

“ Tu nobles ! tu nobles ! ” shrieked he again.

“ Tu ? And would you sell your soul under ten ? ”

“ Oh, if that is it,” cried poor Campion, “ give her ten, give her ten, brother Pars—Morgans, I mean.” And the ten nobles were paid into her hand.

And now the boat, its dragon guardian being pacified, was run down to the sea, and rose past the nook where poor kittle Rose

was squeezing herself into the furthest and darkest corner, among wet sea-weed and rough barnacles, holding her breath as they approached.

But the night's adventures were not ended yet ; for just as the boat was launched, a faint halloo was heard upon the beach, and a minute after, a horseman plunged down the pebbles, and along the sand.

"It's Mr. Eustace ! Oh, dear Sir, I took you for one of Sir Richard's men ! Oh, Sir, you're hurt !" said one of the serving men.

"A scratch, a scratch !" almost moaned Eustace. "Help me into the boat, Jack. Gentlemen, I must with you."

"Not with us, surely, my dear son, vagabonds upon the face of the earth ?" said kind-hearted Campian.

"With you for ever. All is over here. Whither God and the cause lead"—and he staggered toward the boat.

As he passed Rose, she saw his ghastly bleeding face, half bound up with a handkerchief, which could not conceal the convulsions of rage, shame, and despair, which twisted it from all its usual beauty. His eyes glared wildly round—and once, right into the cavern. They met hers, so full, and keen, and dreadful, that forgetting she was utterly invisible, the terrified girl was on the point of shrieking aloud.

"He has overlooked me !" said she, shuddering to herself, as she recollected his threat of yesterday.

"Who has wounded you ?" asked Campian.

"My cousin—Amyas—and taken the letter !"

"The devil take him, then !" cried Parsons, stamping up and down upon the sand in fury.

"Ay, curse him—you may ! I dare not ! He saved me—sent me here !"—and with a groan, he made an effort to enter the boat.

"Oh, my dear young gentleman," cried Lucy Passmore, her woman's heart bursting out at the sight of pain. "you must not go forth with a grane wound like to that. Do ye let me just bind run up—do ye now !" and she advanced.

Eustace thrust her back.

"No ! better bear it. I deserve it—devils ! I deserve it ! On board, or we shall all be lost—William Cary is close behind me !"

And at that news the boat was thrust into the sea, faster than ever it went before, and only in time ; for it was but just round the rocks, and out of sight, when the rattle of Cary's horsehoofs was heard above.

"That rascal of Mr. Leigh's will catch it now, the Popish

villain ! ” said Lucy Passmore aloud. “ You lie still here, dear life, and settle your sperrits ; you’ m so safe as ever was rabbit to burrow. I’ ll see what happens, if I die for it ! ” And so saying she squeezed herself up through a cleft to a higher ledge, from whence she could see what passed in the valley.

“ There mun is ! in the meadow, trying to catch the horses ! There comes Mr. Cary ! Goodness Father, how a rid’ th ! he’s over wall already ! Ron, Jack ! ron then ! Ah’ ll get to the river ! No, a waint ! Goodness Father ! There’s Mr. Cary cotched mun ! A’s down, a’s down ! ”

“ And now then, my dear life, us be better to goo hoom and get you summat warm. You’ m mortal cold, I rackon, by now. I was cruel feared for ye : but I kept mun off clever, didn’t I, now ? ”

“ I wish—I wish I had not seen Mr. Leigh’s face ! ”

“ Iss dreadful, weren’t it, poor young soul ; a sad night for his poor mother ! ”

“ Lucy, I can’t get his face out of my mind. I’ m sure he overlooked me.”

“ O then ! who ever heard the like o’ that ? When young gentlemen do overlook young ladies, taint thikketheor aways, I knoo. Never you think on it.”

“ But I can’t help thinking of it,” said Rose.

“ Goodness Father ! and all this while us have forgot the very thing us come about ! Who did ye see ? ”

“ Only that face ! ” said Rose, shuddering.

“ Not in the glass, maid ? Say then, not in the glass ? ”

“ Would to heaven it had been ! Lucy, what if he were the man I was fated to—”

“ He ? Why he’s a praste, a Popish praste, that can’t marry if he would, poor, wratch.”

“ He is none ; and I have cause enough to know it ! ” And, for want of a better confidant, Rose poured into the willing ears of her companion the whole story of yesterday’s meeting.

“ He’s a pretty wooer ! ” said Lucy at last, contemptuously. “ Be a brave maid, then be a brave maid, and never terrify yourself with his unlucky face. It’s because there was none here worthy of ye, that ye seed none in glass.”

CHAPTER VII

THE TRUE AND TRAGICAL HISTORY OF MR. JOHN OXENHAM OF PLYMOUTH

IT was the afternoon of the next day. Sir Richard and Amyas were deep in conversation. After much discussion, Amyas said suddenly—

“And I may go to Ireland to-morrow?”

“You shall sail in the ‘Mary’ for Milford Haven, with these letters to Winter. If the wind serves, you may bid the master drop down the river to-night, and be off; for we must lose no time.”

“Winter?” said Amyas. “He is no friend of mine, since he left Drake and us so cowardly at the Straits of Magellan.”

“Duty must not wait for private quarrels, even though they be just ones, lad: but he will not be your general. When you come to the Marshal, or the Lord Deputy, give either of them this letter, and they will set you work,—and hard work too, I warrant.”

“I want nothing better.”

“Right, lad; the best reward for having wrought well already, is to have more to do. As for those who, either in this world or the world to come, look for idleness, and hope that God shall feed them with pleasant things, as it were with a spoon, Amyas I count them cowards and base, even though they call themselves saints and elect.”

“I wish you could persuade my poor cousin of that.”

“He has yet to learn what losing his life to save it means, Amyas. Bad men have taught him that it is the one great business of every one to save his own soul after he dies, every one for himself; and that that, and not divine self-sacrifice, is the one thing needful.”

“I think men are inclined enough already to be selfish, without being taught that.”

But to return. That day’s events were not over yet. For, when they went into the house, the first person whom they met was the old steward, in search of his master.

“There is a manner of roog, Sir Richard, a masterless man, at the door; a very forward fellow, and must needs speak with you.”

“A masterless man? He had better not to speak to me, unless he is in love with gaol and gallows.”

Amyas offered to interview the man and went to the door.

There was something stately and yet humble about the man's tone and manner which attracted Amyas, and he asked gently where he was going and whence he came.

"From Padstow Port, Sir, to Clovelly town, to see my old mother, if indeed she be yet alive, which God knoweth."

"What's thy mother's name, then ?"

"Susan Yeo."

"What, that lived under the archway ?" asked a groom.

"Lived ?" said the man.

"Iss, sure ; her died three days since, so we heard, poor soul."

The man stood quite silent and unmoved for a minute or two ; and then said quietly to himself in Spanish, "That which is, is best."

"You speak Spanish ?" asked Amyas, more and more interested. "I had need to do so, young Sir ; I have been five years in the Spanish main, and only set foot on shore two days ago ; and if you will let me have speech of Sir Richard, I will tell him that at which both the ears of him that heareth it shall tingle ; and if not, I can but go on to Mr. Cary of Clovelly, if he be yet alive, and there disburthen my soul : but I would sooner have spoken with one that is a mariner like to myself."

"And you shall," said Amyas. "Steward, we will have this man in ; for all his rags, he is a man of wit." And he led him in.

"I only hope he ben't one of those popish murderers," said the old steward, keeping at a safe distance from him, as they entered the hall.

"Popish, old master ? There's little fear of my being that. Look here !" And drawing back his rags, he showed a ghastly scar, which encircled his wrist and wound round and up his forearm.

"I got that on the rack," said he quietly, "in the Inquisition at Lima."

"O Father ! Father ! why didn't you tell us that you were a poor Christian ?" asked the penitent steward.

"Because I have had naught but my deserts ; and but a taste of them either, as the Lord knoweth who delivered me ; and I wasn't going to make myself a beggar and a show on their account."

"By heaven, you are a brave fellow !" said Amyas. "Come along straight to Sir Richard's room."

So in they went, where Sir Richard sat in his library among books, despatches, state-papers, and warrants.

"Hi'lo, Amyas, have you bound the wild man already, and brought him in to swear allegiance ?"

But before Amyas could answer, the man looked earnestly on him—"Amyas?" said he; "is that your name, Sir?"

"Amyas Leigh is my name, at your service, good fellow."

"Of Burrough by Bideford?"

"Why then? What do you know of me?"

"Oh Sir, Sir! Do you mind one that was with Mr. Oxenham, Sir? a swearing reprobate he was, God forgive him, and hath forgiven him too, for his dear Son's sake,—one, Sir, that gave you a horn, a toy with a chart on it?"

"Soul alive!" cried Amyas, catching him by the hand; "and are you he? The horn? why I have it still, and will keep it to my dying day too. But where is Mr. Oxenham?"

"Yes, my good fellow, where is Mr. Oxenham?" asked Sir Richard, rising.

"Well, Sir," said the man, "my name is Salvation Yeo, born in Clovelly Street, in the year 1526, where my father exercised the mystery of a barber surgeon, and a preacher of the people since called Anabaptists, for which I return humble thanks to God."

Then Yeo settled himself to his tale:—

"Well, sirs, I went, as Mr. Leigh knows, to Nombre de Dios, with Mr. Drake and Mr. Oxenham, in 1572, where what we saw and did, your worship, I suppose, knows as well as I; and there was, as you've heard may be, a covenant between Mr. Oxenham and Mr. Drake to sail the South Seas together, which they made, your worship, in my hearing, under the tree over Panama. For when Mr. Drake came down from the tree, after seeing the sea afar off, Mr. Oxenham and I went up and saw it too; and when we came down, Drake says, 'John, I have made a vow to God that I will sail that water, if I live and God gives me grace;' and Mr. O. says, 'I am with you, Drake, to live or die, and I think I know some one there already, so we shall not be quite among strangers;' and laughed withal. Well, sirs, that voyage, as you know, never came off, because Captain Drake was fighting in Ireland; so Mr. Oxenham, who must be up and doing, sailed for himself, and I who loved him, helped him to get the crew together, and went as his gunner. That was in 1575; as you know, he had a 140-ton ship, Sir, and seventy men out of Plymouth and Fowey and Dartmouth, and many of them old hands of Drake's, beside a dozen or so from Bideford that I picked up when I saw young Master here."

"Thank God that you did not pick me up too."

"Amen, amen!" said Yeo, clasping his hands on his breast. "Those seventy men, Sir,—seventy gallant men, Sir, with every one of them an immortal soul within him,—where are they now? Gone, like the spray!" And he swept his hands abroad with

a wild and solemn gesture. "And their blood is upon my head !"

Both Sir Richard and Amyas began to suspect that the man's brain was not altogether sound.

"God forbid my man," said the Knight kindly.

"Well, Sirs, we came to the shore of New Spain, near to the old place—that's Nombre de Dios ; and there Mr. Oxenham went ashore into the woods with a boat's crew, to find the negroes who helped us three years before. After three days the Captain comes back, looking heavy enough, and says, 'We played our trick once too often, when we played it once. The Cimaroons say that since our last visit they never move without plenty of soldiers, two hundred shot at least. Therefore,' he said, 'my gallants, we must either return empty-handed from this, the very market and treasury of the whole Indies, or do such a deed as men never did before, which I shall like all the better for that very reason. The South Seas have been my mark all along ! such news have I of plate-ships, and gold-ships, and what not, which will come up from Quito and Lima this very month, all which, with the pearls of the Gulf of Panama, and other wealth unspeakable, will be ours, if we have but true English hearts within us.'

"At which, gentles, we were like madmen for lust of that gold, and cheerfully undertook a toil incredible ; for first we run our ship aground in a great wood which grew in the very sea itself, and then took out her masts, and covered her in boughs, with her four cast pieces of great ordnance (of which more hereafter), and leaving no man in her, started for the South Seas across the neck of Panama, with two small pieces of ordnance and our culverins, and good store of victuals, and with us six of those negroes for a guide, and so twelve leagues to a river which runs into the South Sea.

"And there, having cut wood, we made a pinnace (and work enough we had at it), of five-and-forty foot in the keel ; and in her down the stream, and to the Isle of Pearls in the Gulf of Panama."

"Into the South Sea ? Impossible !" said Sir Richard. "Have a care what you say, my man ; for there is that about you which would make me sorry to find you out a liar."

"Impossible or not, liar or none, we went there, Sir."

"Question him, Amyas, lest he turn out to have been beforehand with you."

The man looked inquiringly at Amyas, who said,—

"Well, my man, of the Gulf of Panama I cannot ask you, for I never was inside it : but what other parts of the coast do you know ?"

Every inch, Sir, from Cabo San Francisco to Lima ; more is

my sorrow, for I was a galley-slave there for two years and more."

"You know Lima?"

"I was there three times, worshipful gentlemen, and the last was February come two years; and there I helped lade a great plate-ship, the 'Cacafuogo,' they called her."

Amyas started. Sir Richard nodded to him gently to be silent, and then—

"And what became of her my lad?"

"God knows. I broke prison six weeks afterwards, and never heard but that she got safe into Panama."

"You never heard, then, that she was taken?"

"Taken, your worships? Who should take her?"

"Why should not a good English ship take her as well as another?" asked Amyas.

"Lord, love you, Sir; yes faith, if they had but been there. Many's the time that I thought to myself, as we went alongside, 'Oh, if Captain Drake was but here, well to windward, and our old crew of the Dragon!' Ask your pardon, gentles: but how is Captain Drake, if I may make so bold?"

Neither could hold out longer.

"Fellow!" cried Sir Richard, springing up, "either thou art the cunningest liar that ever earned a halter, or thou hast done a deed the like of which never man adventured. Dost thou not know that Captain Drake took that 'Cacafuogo' and all her freight, in February come two years?"

"Captain Drake! God forgive me, Sir; but—Captain Drake in the South Seas? He saw them, Sir, from the tree-top, over Panama, when I was with him, and I too; but sailed them Sir?—sailed them?"

"Yes, and round the world too," said Amyas, "and I with him; and took that very 'Cacafuogo' off Cape San Francisco, as she came up to Panama."

One glance at the man's face was enough to prove his sincerity. The great stern Anabaptist, who had not winced at the news of his mother's death, dropped right on his knees on the floor, and burst into violent sobs.

"Glory to God! Glory to God! O Lord, I thank thee! Captain Drake in the South Seas! The blood of thy innocents avenged, O Lord! Tell me, Sir, did she fight?"

"We gave her three pieces of ordnance only, and struck down her mizen mast, and then boarded sword in hand, but never had need to strike a blow."

"Cowards they are, as I told them. Told them they never

could stand the Devon mastiffs, and well they flogged me for saying it ; but they could not stop my mouth. O Sir, tell me, did you get the ship that came up after her ? ”

“ What was that ? ”

“ A long race-ship, Sir, from Guayaquil, with an old gentleman on board,—Don Francisco de Xararte was his name,—and by token, he had a gold falcon hanging to a chain round his neck, and a green stone in the breast of it. I saw it as we rowed him aboard. O tell me, Sir, tell me for the love of God, did you take that ship ? ”

“ We did take that ship, and the jewel too, and her Majesty has it at this very hour.”

“ Then tell me, Sir,” said he slowly, as if he dreaded an answer ; “ tell me, Sir, and oh, try and mind—was there a little maid aboard with the old gentleman ? ”

“ A little maid ? Let me think. No : I saw none.”

The man settled his features again sadly.

“ I thought not. I never saw her come aboard. Still I hoped, like ; I hoped. Alackaday ! God help me, Salvation Yeo ! ”

“ What have you to do with this little maid, then, good fellow ? ” asked Grenville.

“ Ah, Sir, before I tell you that, I must go back and finish the story of Mr. Oxenham, if you will believe me enough to hear it.”

“ I do believe thee, good fellow, and honour thee too.”

“ Then, Sir, I can speak with a free tongue. Where was I ? ”

“ At the Isle of Pearls.”

“ Well, Sirs both—To the Island of Pearls we came, we and some of the negroes. We found many huts, and Indians fishing for pearls ; but no Spaniard save one man ; at which Mr. Oxenham was like a man transported, and fell on that Spaniard, crying, ‘ Perro, where is your mistress ? Where is the bark from Lima ? ’ and the Spaniard, said that the ship from Lima was expected in a fortnight’s time. So for ten days we lay quiet, letting neither negro nor Spaniard leave the island, and took good store of pearls, when there came by a small bark ; her we took, and found her from Quito, and on board 60,000 pezos of gold and other store. With which if we had been content, gentlemen, all had gone well. And some were willing to go back at once, having both treasure and pearls in plenty ; but Mr. O., he waxed right mad, assuring us that the Lima ship of which he had news was far greater and richer, and would make princes of us all ; which bark came in sight on the sixteenth day, and was taken without shot or slaughter.

“ In that bark of Lima he took a young lady, as fair as the

sunshine, Sir, and seemingly about two or three-and-twenty years of age, having with her a tall young lad of sixteen, and a little girl a marvellously pretty child, of about a six or seven. And the lady herself was of an excellent beauty, so that all the crew wondered at her, and could not be satisfied with looking upon her. And, gentlemen, this was strange, that the lady seemed in no wise afraid or mournful, and bid her little girl fear nought, as did also Mr. Oxenham : but the lad kept a sour countenance, the more when he saw the lady and Mr. Oxenham speaking together apart.

“ Well, Sir, after this good luck we were minded to have gone straight back to the river whence we came, and so home to England with all speed. But Mr. Oxenham persuaded us to return to the island, and get a few more pearls. To which foolishness I verily believe, he was moved by the instigation of that lady. For as we were about to go ashore, I going down into the cabin of the prize, saw Mr. Oxenham and that lady making great cheer of each other with, ‘ My life,’ and ‘ My king,’ and ‘ Light of my eyes,’ and such toys ; and being bidden by Mr. Oxenham to fetch out the lady’s mails, and take them ashore, heard how the two laughed together about the old ape of Panama, (which ape, or devil rather, I saw afterwards to my cost), and also how she said, that she had been dead for five years, and now that Mr. Oxenham was come, she was alive again, and so forth.”

“ Well, Sirs, we came back to the mouth of the river, and there began our troubles. Mr. Oxenham asked the men whether they were willing to carry the gold and silver over the mountains to the North Sea. Some of them at first were loth to do it, and I and others advised, that we should leave the plate behind, and take the gold only, for it would have cost us three or four journeys at the least. But Mr. Oxenham promised every man 100 pesos of silver over and above his wages, which made them content enough, and we were all to start the morrow morning. But, Sirs, that night, as God had ordained, came a mishap by some rash speeches of Mr. Oxenham’s, which threw all abroad again ; for when we had carried the treasure about half a league inland, and hidden it away in a house which we made of boughs, Mr. O. being always full of that his fair lady, spoke to me and William Penberthy of Marazion, my good comrade, and a few more, saying, ‘ That we had no need to return to England, seeing that we were already in the very garden of Eden, and wanted for nothing, but could live without labour or toil ; and that it was better, when we got over to the North Sea, to go and seek out some fair island, and there dwell in joy and pleasure till our lives’ end. And we two,’ he said, ‘ will be king and queen, and you, whom I can trust, my officers ; and

for servants we will have the Indians, who, I warrant, will be more fain to serve honest and merry masters like us than those Spanish devils,' and much more of the like ; which words I liked well,—my mind, alas ! being given altogether to carnal pleasure and vanity. But the rest, Sirs, took the matter all across, and began murmuring against the Captain, saying that poor honest mariners like them had always the labour and the pain, while he took his delight with his lady. One thing led to another and what with the hardship of life, and drink and the captain wasting time to be with the lady, there was something like a mutiny, the men rushed at Mr. O. who called out, ' All honest men who know me, and can trust me, stand by your lawful Captain against these ruffians.' Whereon, Sirs, I, and Penberthy my good comrade, and four Plymouth men, who had sailed with Mr. O. in Mr. Drake's ship, and knew his trusty and valiant conditions, came over to him, and swore before God to stand by him and the lady. Then said Mr. O. to the rest, ' Will you carry this treasure, knaves, or will you not ? Give me an answer here.' And they refused, unless he would, before they started, give each man his share.' And next morning, when the wine was gone out of them, Mr. O. asked them whether they would go to the hills with him, and find the negroes, and persuade them after all to carry the treasure. To which they agreed, thinking that so they should save themselves labour ; and went off with Mr. Oxenham, leaving us six who had stood by him to watch the lady and the treasure.'

" When they had been gone seven days, we six were down by the pinnacle clearing her out, and the little maid with us gathering of flowers, and William Penberthy fishing on the bank, about a hundred yards below, when on a sudden he leaps up and runs toward us, crying, ' Here come the Spaniards.'

" Which was too true ; for before we could win the house, there were full eighty shot at our heels, and one of the Plymouth men was killed. The rest of us escaped to the house, and catching up the lady, fled forth, not knowing whither we went, while the Spaniards, finding the house and treasure, pursued us no further.

" All that day and the next we wandered in great misery, the lady weeping continually, and calling for Mr. Oxenham most piteously, and the little maid likewise, till with much ado we found the track of our comrades, and went up that as best we might : but at nightfall, by good hap, we met the whole crew coming back, and with them 200 negroes or more, with bows and arrows.

" Mr. Oxenham embraced the lady, then turning to us offered us half of that treasure, if we would go back with him, and rescue it from the Spaniard. After much ado, back they went again ;

I and Penberthy, and the three Plymouth men which escaped from the pinnacle, keeping the lady as before.

"Well, Sirs, we waited five days and on the sixth we saw coming afar off Mr. Oxenham, and with him fifteen or twenty men, who seemed very weary and wounded ; and when we looked for the rest to be behind them, behold there were no more ; at which, Sirs, as you may well think, our hearts sank within us.

"And Mr. O., coming nearer, cried out afar off, ' All is lost ! ' and so walked into the camp without a word, and sat himself down at the foot of a great tree with his head between his hands.

"A little later, we went forward over the mountains till we came to a little river which ran northward which, seemed to lead into the Northern Sea ; and there Mr. O.—who, after his first rage was over, behaved himself all through like a valiant and skilful commander—bade us cut down trees and make canoes, to go down to the sea ; but as we were a burning out of the first tree, and cutting down of another, a great party of negroes came upon us, and with much friendly show bade us flee for our lives, for the Spaniards were upon us in great force. And so we were up and away again, hardly able to drag our legs after us for hunger and weariness, and the broiling heat. And some were taken, (God help them !) and some fled with the negroes, of whom what became God alone knoweth ; but eight or ten held on with the Captain, among whom was I, and fled downward toward the sea for one day ; but afterwards finding, by the noise in the woods, that the Spaniards were on the track of us, we turned up again toward the inland, and coming to a cliff, climbed up over it, drawing up the lady and the little maid with cords of liana.

"By which, nevertheless, we only increased our misery. For two fell from that cliff, as men asleep for very weariness, and miserably broke their bones ; and others, whether by the great toil, or sunstrokes, or eating of strange berries, fell sick of fluxes and fevers ; where was no drop of water, but rock of pumice stone as bare as the back of my hand, and full, moreover, of great cracks, black and without bottom, over which we had not strength to lift the sick, but were fain to leave them there aloft, in the sunshine.

"So getting down the slope on the further side, we came into the woods once more, and there wandered for many days, I know not how many ; our shoes being gone, and our clothes all rent off us with brakes and briars. And yet how the lady endured all was a marvel to see ; for she went barefoot many days, and for clothes was fain to wrap herself in Mr. Oxenham's cloak ; while the little maid went all but naked.

“ And so, to make few words of a sad matter, at last there were none left but Mr. Oxenham and the lady and the little maid, together with me and William Penberthy of Marazion, my good comrade. And Mr. Oxenham always led the lady, and Penberthy and I carried the little maid. And for food we had fruits, such as we could find, and water we got from the leaves of certain lilies which grew on the bark of trees. And so we wandered on, and upward into very high mountains. And it befel upon a day, that we came into a great wood of ferns, where was very pleasant shade, cool and green ; and there, gentlemen, we sat down on a bank of moss, like folk desperate and foredone, and every one looked the other in the face for a long while. After which I took off the bark of those ferns, for I must needs be doing something to drive away thought, and began to plait slippers for the little maid.

“ And as I was plaiting, Mr. Oxenham said, ‘ What hinders us from dying like men, every man falling on his own sword ? ’ To which we would not agree ; but the lady said, ‘ Ah, how gladly would I die ! but then la pauvre garse,’ which is in French ‘ the poor maid,’ meaning the little one. Then Mr. Oxenham fell into a very great weeping, a weakness I never saw him in before or since ; and with many tears besought me never to desert that little maid, whatever might befal ; which I promised, swearing to it like a heathen, but would, if I had been able, have kept it like a Christian. But on a sudden there was a great cry in the wood, and coming through the trees on all sides Spanish arquebusiers, a hundred strong at least, and negroes with them, who bade us stand or they would shoot. William Penberthy leapt up, crying, ‘ Treason ! ’ and running upon the nearest negro ran him through, and then another, and then falling on the Spaniards, fought manfully till he was borne down with pikes, and so died. But I, seeing nothing better to do, sate still and finished my plaiting. And so we were all taken, and I and Mr. Oxenham bound with cords ; but the soldiers made a litter for the lady and child, by commandment of Señor Diego de Trees, their commander, a very courteous gentleman.

“ Well, Sirs, we were brought down to the place where the house of boughs had been by the river-side ; there we went over in boats, and found waiting for us certain Spanish gentlemen, and among others one old and ill-favoured man, the old man with the gold falcon at his breast, Don Francisco Zararte by name, whom you found aboard of the Lima ship. And had you known as much of him as I do, or as Mr. Oxenham did either, you had cut him up for shark’s bait.

"Well, Sirs, as soon as the lady came to shore, that old man ran upon her sword in hand, and would have slain her, but some there held him back. On which he turned to, and reviled with every foul and spiteful word which he could think of, so that some there bade him be silent for shame ; and Mr. Oxenham said, 'It is worthy of you, Don Francisco, thus to trumpet abroad your own disgrace. Did I not tell you years ago that you were a cur ; and are you not proving my words for me ?'

At which the old man turned pale, and then began again to upbraid the lady, vowing that he would have her burnt alive, and other devilish words, to which she answered at last—

" 'Would that you had burnt me alive on my wedding morning, and spared me eight years of misery !' " And he—

" 'Misery ? Hear the witch, Señors ! Oh, have I not pampered her, heaped with jewels, clothes, coaches, what not ? The saints alone know what I have spent on her. What more would she have of me ?'

"To which she answered only but this one word, 'Fool !' but in so terrible a voice, though low, that they who were about to laugh at the old pantaloon, were more minded to weep for her.

" 'Fool !' she said again, after a while, 'I will waste no words upon you. I would have driven a dagger to your heart months ago, but that I was loth to set you free so soon from your gout and your rheumatism. Selfish and stupid, know when you bought my body from my parents, you did not buy my soul ! Farewell, my love, my life ! and farewell, Señors ! May you be more merciful to your daughters than my parents were to me !' And so, catching a dagger from the girdle of one of the soldiers, smote herself to the heart, and fell dead before them all.

"At which Mr. Oxenham smiled, and said, 'That was worthy of us both. If you will unbind my hands, Senors, I shall be most happy to copy so fair a schoolmistress.'

"But Don Diego shook his head, and said,

"On questioning those of your sailors, whom I have already taken, I cannot hear that you have any letters of licence, either from the Queen of England, or any other potentate. I am compelled, therefore, to ask you, whether this is so ; for it is a matter of life and death."

"To which Mr. Oxenham answered merrily, 'That so it was : but that he was not aware that any potentate's licence was required to permit a gentleman's meeting his lady love ; and that as for the gold which they had taken, if they had never allowed that fresh and fair young May to be forced into marrying that old January, he should never have meddled with their gold : so that

was rather their fault than his.' And added, that if he was to be hanged, as he supposed, the only favour which he asked for was a long drop and no priests.

"And now, Sirs, what befel me after that matters little ; for I never saw Captain Oxenham again, nor ever shall in this life."

"He was hanged, then ?"

"So I heard for certain the next year, and with him the gunner and sundry more : but some were given away for slaves to the Spaniards, and may be alive now, unless, like me, they have fallen into the cruel clutches of the Inquisition."

"But how did you get into the Inquisition ?"

"Why, Sir, after we were taken, we set forth to go down the river again : and the old Don took the little maid with him in one boat, (and bitterly she screeched at parting from us, and from the poor dead corpse) and Mr. Oxenham with Don Diego de Trees in another, and I in a third. And from the Spaniards I learnt that we were to be taken down to Lima, to the Viceroy : but that the old man lived hard by Panama, and was going straight back to Panama forthwith with the little maid. But they said, 'It will be well for her if she ever gets there, for the old man swears she is none of his, and would have left her behind him in the woods now, if Don Diego had not shamed him out of it.' And when I heard that, seeing that there was nothing but death before me, I made up my mind to escape ; and the very first night, I did it, and went southward away into the forest till I came to an Indian town. And there, gentlemen, I got more mercy from heathens than ever I had from Christians ; for when they found that I was no Spaniard, they fed me and gave me a house, and a wife (and a good wife she was to me,) and painted me all over in patterns, as you see. And in time, my wife bare me a child, but one night, after we were all lain down, came a noise outside the town, and I starting up saw armed Spaniards.

"What do the villains but let fly right into the town with their calivers, and then rush in, sword in hand, killing pell-mell all they met, one of which shots, gentlemen, passing through the doorway, and close by me, struck my poor wife to the heart, that she never spoke word more. I, catching up the babe from her breast, sat down by the corpse with the babe on my knees, waiting the end, like one stunned and in a dream. Well, gentlemen, they dragged me out, and all the young men and women, and chained us together by the neck ; and one, catching the pretty babe out of my arms, calls for water and a priest, and no sooner was it christened, than, catching the babe by the heels, he dashed out its brains—oh ! gentlemen, gentlemen !—against

the ground, as if it had been a kitten ; and so marched us all for slaves. But when morning came, and they knew by my skin that I was no Indian, and by my speech that I was no Spaniard ; they began threatening me with torments, till I confessed that I was an Englishman, and one of Oxenham's crew. At that says the leader, ' Then you shall to Lima, to hang by the side of your Captain the pirate ; by which I first knew that my poor Captain was certainly gone ; but alas for me, to the Inquisition at Carthage-na I went, where what I suffered, gentlemen, were as disgusting for you to hear, as unmanly for me to complain of ; but so it was, that being twice racked, and having endured the water-torment as best I could, I was put to the scarpines, whereof I am, as you see, somewhat lame of one leg to this day. In this hell, nevertheless, gentlemen, I found the road to heaven—I had almost said heaven itself. For it fell out, by God's mercy, that my next comrade was an Englishman like myself, a young man of Bristol, who, as he told me, had been some manner of factor on board poor Captain Barker's ship, and had been a preacher among the Anabaptists here in England. And, oh ! Sir Richard Grenville, if that man had done for you what he did for me, you would never say a word against those who serve the same Lord, because they don't altogether hold with you. From time to time, Sir, seeing me altogether despairing and furious, like a wild beast in a pit, he set before me in secret earnestly the sweet promises of Christ, who says, ' Come to me, all ye that are heavy laden, and I will refresh you ; and though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow,' till all that past sinful life of mine looked like a dream when one awaketh, and I forgot all my bodily miseries in the misery of my soul.

And Sir Richard Grenville said Amen.

" Well gentlemen, when I heard that I must end my days in a galley, I was for awhile like a madman ; but in a day or two here came over me, I know not how, a full assurance of salvation, both for this life and the life to come, such as I had never had before.

" And all the way up to Panama (that was after we had laden the ' Cacafuogo ') I cast in my mind how to escape, and found no way : but just as I was beginning to lose heart again, a door was opened by the Lord's own hand ; for (I know not why) we were marched across from Panama to Nombre, which had never happened before, and there put all together into a great barranco close by the quayside, shackled, as is the fashion, to one long bar that ran the whole length of the house. And the very first night that we were there, I, looking out of the window, spied, lying close aboard of the quay, a good sized caravel, well armed and just

loading for sea ; and the land breeze blew off very strong, so that the sailors were paying out a fresh warp to hold her to the shore. And it came into my mind, that if we were aboard of her, we should be at sea in five minutes ; and looking at the quay, I saw all the soldiers who had guarded us scattered about drinking and gambling, and some going into taverns to refresh themselves after their journey. That was just at sundown ; and half an hour after, in comes the gaoler to take a last look at us for the night, and his keys at his girdle. Whereon, Sirs, (whether by madness, or whether by the spirit which gave Samson strength to rend the lion,) I rose against him as he passed me, without forethought or treachery of any kind, chained though I was, caught him by the head, and threw him there and then against the wall, that he never spoke word after ; and then with his keys freed myself and every soul in that room, and bid them follow me. They followed as men astounded and leaping out of night into day, and death into life, and so aboard that caravel and out of the harbour, (the Lord only know how, who blinded the eyes of the idolators) with no more hurt than a few chance-shot from the soldiers on the quay."

" Well, Sirs, they chose me for Captain, and a certain Genoese for lieutenant, and away to go. I would fain have gone ashore after all, and back to Panama to hear news of the little maid : but that would have been but a fool's errand. Some wanted to turn pirates : but I, and the Genoese too, who was a prudent man, though an evil one, persuaded them to run for England and get employment in the Netherlands wars, assuring them that there would be no safety in the Spanish main, when once our escape got wind. And the more part being of one mind, for England we sailed, watering at the Barbados because it was desolate ; and so eastward toward the Canaries. In which voyage what we endured (being taken by long calms), by hunger, and thirst, no tongue can tell. Many a time were we glad to lay out sheets at night to catch the dew, and of a hundred and forty poor wretches a hundred and ten were dead, blaspheming God and man, and above all, me. And last of all, when we thought ourselves safe, we were wrecked by south-westers on the coast of Brittany, near to Cape Race, from which but nine souls of us came ashore with their lives ; and so to Brest, where I found a Flushingier who carried me to Falmouth ; and so ends my tale, in which if I have said one word more or less than truth, I can wish myself no worse, than to have it all to undergo a second time."

And his voice, as he finished, sank from very weariness of soul ; while Sir Richard sat opposite him in silence, his elbows on the

table, his cheeks on his doubled fists, looking him through and through with kindling eyes. No one spoke for several minutes ; and then—

“ Amyas, you have heard this story ? You believe it ? ”

“ Every word, Sir.”

“ So do I. Anthony ! ”

The butler entered.

“ Take this man to the buttery ; clothe him comfortably, and feed him with the best ; and bid the knaves treat him as if he were their own father.”

But Yeo lingered.

“ If I might be so bold as to ask your worship a favour ?—”

“ Anything in reason, my brave fellow.”

“ If your worship could put me in the way of another adventure to the Indies ? ”

“ Another ! Hast not had enough of the Spaniards already ? ”

“ Never enough, Sir, while one of the idolatrous tyrants is left unchanged,” said he, with a right bitter smile. “ But it’s not for that only, Sir ; but my little maid—Oh, sir ! my little maid, that I swore to Mr. Oxenham to look to, and never saw: from that day to this ! I must find her, Sir, or I shall go mad, I believe. Not a night but she comes and calls to me in my dreams, the poor darling ; and not a morning but when I wake there is my oath lying on my soul, like a great black cloud, and I no nearer the keeping of it.”

“ Have patience, man. God will take as good care of thy little maid as ever thou wilt.”

“ I know it, Sir.”

“ My good fellow, there are no adventures to the Indies forward now : but if you want to fight Spaniards, here is a gentleman will show you the way. Amyas, take him with you to Ireland.”

Yeo looked eagerly at the young giant.

“ Will you have me, Sir ? There’s few matters I can’t turn my hand to ; and maybe you’ll be going to the Indies again, some day, eh ? and take me with you ? I know every stone and tree from Nombre to Panama, and all the ports of both the seas.”

Amyas laughed, and nodded ; and the bargain was concluded.

So out went Yeo to eat, and Amyas having received his despatches, got ready for his journey.

CHAPTER VIII

HOW THE NOBLE BROTHERHOOD OF THE ROSE WAS FOUNDED

AMYAS could not sail the next day, or the day after ; for the south-wester freshened, and blew three parts of a gale dead into the bay. So having got the Mary Grenville down the river into Appledore pool, ready to start with the first shift of wind, he went quietly home ; and when his mother started on a pillion behind the old serving-man to ride to Clovelly, where Frank lay wounded, he went in with her as far as Bideford, and there met, coming down the High Street, a procession of horsemen headed by Will Cary. Behind him, in a horse-litter, to Mrs. Leigh's great joy, came Master Frank himself. He deposed that his wounds were only flesh-wounds, the dagger having turned against his ribs ; that he must see the last of his brother ; and that with her good leave he would not come home to Burrough, but take up his abode with Cary in the Ship Tavern, close to the Bridge-foot.

Here, he and Amyas concocted a scheme, which was put into effect the next day (being market-day) : first by the innkeeper, who began under Amyas's orders a bustle of roasting, boiling, and frying, unparalleled in the annals of the Ship Tavern ; and next by Amyas himself, who, going out into the market, invited as many of his old schoolfellows, one by one apart, as Frank had pointed out to him, to a merry supper and a " rowse " thereon consequent ; by which crafty scheme, in came each of Rose Salterne's gentle admirers, and found himself, to his considerable disgust, seated at the same table with six rivals, to none of whom had he spoken for the last six months. However, all were too well bred to let the Leighs discern as much ; and they (though, of course, they knew all) settled their guests, Frank on his couch lying at the head of the table, and Amyas taking the bottom : and contrived, by filling all mouths with good things, to save them the pain of speaking to each other till the wine should have loosened their tongues and warmed their hearts. In the meanwhile both Amyas and Frank, ignoring the silence of their guests with the most provoking good-humour, chatted, and joked, and told stories, and made themselves such good company, that Will Cary, who always found merriment infectious, melted into a jest, and then into another, and finding good humour far more pleasant than bad, tried to make Mr. Coffin laugh, and only made him bow, and to make Mr. Fortesque laugh, and only made

him frown; and unabashed nevertheless, began playing his light artillery upon the waiters, till he drove them out of the room bursting with laughter.

So far so good. And when the cloth was drawn, and sack and sugar became the order of the day, and "Queen and Bible" had been duly drunk with all the honours, Frank tried a fresh move, and—

"I have a toast, gentlemen—here it is. 'The gentlemen of the Irish wars; and may Ireland never be without a St. Leger to stand by a Fortescue, a Fortescue to stand by a St. Leger, and a Chichester to stand by both.'"

Which toast of course involved the drinking the healths of the three representatives of those families, and their returning thanks, and paying a compliment each to the other's house: and so the ice cracked a little further; and young Fortescue proposed the health of "Amyas Leigh, and all bold mariners;" to which Amyas replied by a few blunt kindly words, "that he wished to know no better fortune than to sail round the world again with the present company as fellow-adventurers, and so give the Spaniards and their taste of the men of Devon."

And by this time, the wine going down sweetly, caused the lips of them that were asleep to speak; till the ice broke up altogether, and every man began talking like a rational Englishman to the man who sat next him.

"And now, gentlemen," said Frank, who saw that it was the fit moment for the grand assault which he had planned all along; "let me give you a health which none of you, I dare say, will refuse to drink with heart and soul as well as with lips—the health of one whom beauty and virtue have so ennobled, that in their light the shadow of lowly birth is unseen;—the health of one whom I would proclaim as peerless in loveliness, were it not that every gentleman here has sisters, and yet what else dare I say, while those same lovely ladies who, if they but use their own mirrors, must needs be far better judges of beauty than I can be, have in my own hearing again and again assigned the palm to her? Surely, if the goddesses decide among themselves the question of the golden apple, Paris himself must vacate the judgment-seat. Gentlemen, your hearts, I doubt not, have already bid you, as my unworthy lips do now, to drink 'The Rose of Torridge.'"

If the Rose of Torridge herself had walked into the room, she could hardly have caused more blank astonishment than Frank's bold speech. Every guest turned red, and pale, and red again, and looked at the other, as much as to say, "What right has any one but I had to drink to her? Lift your glass, and I will dash it

out of your hand : " but I will, with sweet effrontery, drank, " The health of the Rose of Torridge, and a double health to that worthy gentleman, whosoever he may be, whom she is fated to honour with her love ! "

" Well done, cunning Frank Leigh ! " cried blunt Will Cary ; " none of us dare quarrel with you now, however much we may sulk at each other. For there's none of us, I'll warrant, but thinks that she likes him the best of all ; and so we are bound to believe that you have drunk our healths all round. "

" And so I have : and what better thing can you do, gentlemen, than to drink each other's healths all round likewise ; and so show yourselves true gentlemen, true Christians, ay, and true lovers ? Believe me, gentlemen all, I no more arrogate to myself a superiority over you, than does the sailor hurled on shore by the surge fancy himself better than his comrade who is still battling with the foam. For I too, gentlemen, — let me confess it, that by confiding in you I may, perhaps, win you to confide in me—have loved, ay and do love, where you love also. Do not start. Is it a matter of wonder that the sun which has dazzled you has dazzled me ? Do not frown, either, gentlemen. I have learnt to love you for loving what I love, and to admire you for admiring that which I admire. What breeds more close communion between subjects, than allegiance to the same Queen ? between brothers, than duty to the same father ? And shall not worship for the same beauty be likewise a bond of love between the worshippers ? and each lover see in his rival not an enemy, but a fellow-sufferer ? You smile, and say in your hearts, that though all may worship, but one can enjoy ; and that one man's meat must be the poison of the rest. Be it so, though I deny it. Shall we make ourselves unworthy of her from our very eagerness to win her ? Will she love us the better, if we come to her with hands stained in the blood of him whom she loves better than us ? If there is to be rivalry among us, let it be a rivalry in nobleness, an emulation in virtue. Let each try to outstrip the other in loyalty to his Queen, in valour against her foes, in deeds of courtesy and mercy to the afflicted and oppressed ; and thus our love will indeed prove its own divine origin, by raising us nearer to those gods whose gift it is. But yet I show you a more excellent way, and that is charity. Why should we not make this common love to her, whom I am unworthy to name, the sacrament of a common love to each other ? Why should we not follow the heroical examples of those ancient knights, who having but one grief, one desire, one goddess, and so uniting themselves in friendship till they became but one soul in

two bodies; lived only for each other in living only for her. I do here promise to be the faithful friend, and, to my ability, the hearty servant, of him who shall be honoured with the love of the Rose of Torridge."

He ceased, and there was a pause.

At last young Fortescue spoke.

"I may be paying you a left-handed compliment, Sir : but it seems to me that you are so likely, in that case, to become your own faithful friend and hearty servant (even if you have not borne off the belle already while we have been asleep), that the bargain is hardly fair between such a gay Italianist and us country swains."

"You undervalue yourself and your country, my dear Sir. But set your mind at rest. I know no more of that lady's mind than you do : nor shall I know. For the sake of my own peace, I have made a vow neither to see her, nor to hear, if possible, tidings of her, till three full years are past. Dixi !"

Mr. Coffin rose.

"Gentlemen, I may submit to be outdone by Mr. Leigh in eloquence, but not in generosity ; if he leaves these parts for three years, I do so also."

"And go in charity with all mankind," said Cary. "Give us your hand, old fellow. I am going, too, as Amyas here can tell, to Ireland away, to cool my hot liver in a bog. Come, give us thy neif, and let us part in peace."

"The Rose !" said Frank, quietly, seeing that his new love-philtre was working well, and determined to strike while the iron was hot, and carry the matter too far to carry it back again.

"The Rose !" cried Cary, catching hold of Coffin's hand with his right, and Fortescue's with his left. "Come, Mr. Coffin !"

And somehow or other, whether it was Frank's chivalrous speech, or Cary's fun, or Amyas's good wine, or the nobleness which lies in every young lad's heart, if their elders will take the trouble to call it out, the whole party came in to terms one by one, shook hands all round, and vowed on the hilt of Amyas's sword, to make fools of themselves no more, at least by jealousy : but to stand by each other and by their lady-love, and neither grudge nor grumble, and in order that the honour of their peerless dame, and the brotherhood which was named after her, might be spread through all lands they would each go home, and ask their fathers' leave to go abroad wheresoever there were "good wars."

And Frank watched and listened with one of his quiet smiles and only said : "Gentlemen, be sure that you will never repent this day."

"Repent ?" said Cary. "I feel already as angelical as thou

lookest, Saint Silvertongue. What was it that sneezed ?—the cat ? ”

“ The lion, rather, by the roar of it,” said Amyas making a dash at the arras behind him. “ Why, here is a doorway here ! and

And rushing under the arras, through an open door behind, he returned, dragging out by the head Mr. John Brimblecombe.

Who was Mr. John Brimblecombe ?

If you have forgotten him, you have done pretty nearly what every one else in the room had done. But he was a certain fat lad, son of the schoolmaster, whom Sir Richard punished for talebearing three years before, by sending him, not to Coventry, but to Oxford. That was the man. He was now one-and-twenty, and a bachelor of Oxford, where he had learnt such things as were taught in those days, with more or less success ; and he was now hanging about Bideford once more, intending to return after Christmas and read divinity, that he might become a parson, and a shepherd of souls in his native land.

“ What business have I here ? ” he said to the question put to him by the assembled company. “ As much as any of you. If you had asked me in, I would have come : but as you didn’t, I came without asking.”

“ You shameless rascal ! ” said Cary. “ Come, if you were asked, where there was good wine ? I’ll warrant you for that ! ”

“ We shall have the whole story over the town by to-morrow,” said someone ; beginning at that thought to feel somewhat ashamed of his late enthusiasm.

“ Ah, Mr. Frank ! You were always the only one that would stand up for me ! ’Twas Cupid, it was ! ”

A roar of laughter followed this announcement.

“ What ? ” asked Frank ; “ was it Cupid then, who sneezed approval to our love, Jack ? ”

But Jack went on desperately.

“ I was in the next room, drinking of my beer. I couldn’t help that, could I ? And then I heard her name ; and I couldn’t help listening then. Flesh and blood couldn’t.”

“ Nor fat either ! ”

“ No, nor fat, Mr. Cary. Do you suppose fat men haven’t souls to be saved, as well as thin ones, and hearts to burst, too, as well as stomachs ? Fat ! Fat can feel, I reckon, as well as lean. Do you suppose there’s nought inside here but beer ? There’s Love ! ” cried Jack. “ Yes, Love !—Ay, you laugh.”

“ Oh Jack, naughty Jack, dost thou heap sin on sin, and luxury on gluttony ? ”

"Sin ? If I sin, you sin : I tell you, and I don't care who knows it, I've loved her these three years as well as e'er a one of you, I have. I've thought o' nothing else, prayed for nothing else, And then you laugh at me, because I'm a poor parson's son, and you fine gentlemen : God made us both, I reckon. You ?—you make a deal of giving her up to-day. Why, it's what I've done for three miserable years as ever poor sinner spent ; ay, from the first day I said to myself, ' Jack, if you can't have that pearl, you'll have none ; and that you can't have, for it's meat for your masters : so conquer or die.' • And I couldn't conquer. I can't help loving her, worshipping her, no more than you ; and I will die : but you needn't laugh meanwhile at me that have done as much as you, and will do again."

" John Brimblecombe, forgive me ! " said Frank. Gentlemen, if we are gentlemen, we ought to ask his pardon. Has he not shown, already more chivalry, more self-denial, and therefore more true love, than any of us ? My friends, let the fierceness of affection, which we have used as an excuse for many a sin of our own, excuse his listening to a conversation in which he well deserved to bear a part."

" Ah," said Jack, " you make me one of your brotherhood ; and see if I do not dare to suffer as much as any of you ! "

" You see, gentlemen," said Amyas, " we must admit him."

" Let me but be your chaplain," said Jack, " and pray for your luck when you're at the wars."

And, Jack Brimblecombe was admitted to the brotherhood. After which they all departed : Amyas and Cary to Winter's squadron ; Frank (as soon as he could travel) to the Court again ; and the Brotherhood of the Rose was scattered far and wide, and Mistress Salterne was left alone with her looking-glass.

CHAPTER IX

HOW THE MAYOR OF BIDEFORD BAITED HIS HOOK WITH HIS OWN FLESH

DURING the war in Ireland against the Spaniards, Amyas captured the renowned Don Guzman. After some time, he was allowed to be the guest of Sir Richard Grenville until such time as his ransom was paid.

Don Guzman settled down quietly enough at Bideford on his parole, in better quarters than he had occupied for many a day, and took things as they came, like a true soldier of fortune ; till,

after he had been with Grenville hardly a month, old Salterne the Mayor came to supper.

Now Don Guzman however much he might be puzzled at first at our strange English ways of asking burghers and such low-bred folk to eat and drink in the company of noble persons, was quite gentleman enough to know that Richard Grenville was gentleman enough to do only what was correct, and according to the customs and proprieties. So after shrugging the shoulders of his spirit, he submitted to eat and drink at the same board with a tradesman who sat at a desk, and made up ledgers, and took apprentices ; and hearing him talk with Grenville neither unwisely nor in a vulgar fashion, actually before the evening was out, condescended to exchange words with him himself. Whereon he found him a very prudent and courteous person, quite aware of the Spaniard's superior rank, and making him feel, in every sentence, that he was aware thereof ; and yet holding his own opinion, and asserting his own rights as a wise elder, in a fashion which the Spaniard had only seen before among the merchant princes of Genoa and Venice.

At the end of supper, Salterne asked Grenville to do his humble roof the honour, &c. &c., of supping with him the next evening ; and then turning to the Don, said quite frankly, that he knew how great a condescension it would be on the part of a nobleman of Spain to sit at the board of a simple merchant : but that if the Spaniard deigned to do him such a favour, he would find that the cheer was fit enough for any rank, whatsoever the company might be ; which invitation Don Guzman, being on the whole glad enough of anything to amuse him, graciously condescended to accept, and gained thereby an excellent supper, and, if he had chosen to drink it, much good wine.

Now Mr. Salterne was as ready as any man for an adventure to foreign parts, as was afterwards proved by his great exertions in the settlement of Virginia ; and he was, therefore, equally ready to rack the brains of any guest whom he suspected of knowing anything concerning strange lands ; and so he thought no shame, first to try to loose his guest's tongue by much good sack, and next to ask him prudent and well-concocted questions concerning the Spanish Main, Peru, the Moluccas, China, the Indies, and all parts.

The first of which schemes failed ; for the Spaniard drank little but water ; the second succeeded not over well, for the Spaniard was as cunning as any fox, and answered little but wind.

In the midst of which tongue-fence in came the Rose of Torridge, looking as beautiful as usual ; and hearing what they were upon, added, artlessly enough, her questions to her father's ; to her Don

Guzman could not but answer; and without revealing any very important commercial secrets, gave his host and his host's daughter a very amusing evening.

The Don being idle, (as captives needs must be), looked round for mere amusement's sake after some one with whom to fall in love. Lady Grenville was thought of first. Nevertheless, he had put her out of his mind; and so left room to take Rose Salterne into it, not with any distinct purpose of wronging her: but, as I said before, half to amuse himself, and half, too, because he could not help it. For there was an innocent freshness about the Rose of Torridge, fond as she was of being admired, which was new to him and most attractive.

Everywhere English commerce, under the genial sunshine of Elizabeth's wise rule, was spreading and taking root; and as Don Guzman talked with his new merchant friends, he soon saw that they belonged to a race which must be exterminated if Spain intended to become (as she did intend) the mistress of the world; and that it was not enough for Spain to have seized, in the Pope's name the whole new world, and claimed the exclusive right to sail the seas of America: not enough to have crushed the Hollanders; not enough to have degraded the Venetians into her bankers, and the Genoese into her mercenaries; not enough to have incorporated into herself, with the kingdom of Portugal, the whole East Indian trade of Portugal, while these fierce islanders remained to assert free seas and free trade for all the nations upon earth. He saw it, and his countrymen saw it too: and therefore the Spanish Armada came: but of that hereafter. And Don Guzman knew also, by hard experience, that these same islanders, who sat in Salterne's parlour talking broad Devon through their noses, were no mere counters of money and hucksters of goods: but men who, though they thoroughly hated fighting, and loved making money instead, could fight upon occasion, after a very dogged and terrible fashion. And one evening he waxed quite mad, when after having civilly enough hinted that if Englishmen came where they had no right to come, they might find themselves sent back again, he was answered by a volley of—

“We'll see that, Sir.”

“Depends on who says ‘No right.’”

“You found might right,” said another, “when you claimed the Indian seas; we may find right might when we try them.”

“Try them, then, gentlemen, by all means, if it shall so please your worships; and find the sacred flag of Spain as invincible as ever was the Roman eagle.”

“We have, Sir. Did you ever hear of Francis Drake?”

“ Or of George Feñner and the Portugals at the Azores, one against seven ? ”

“ Or of John Hawkins, at St. Juan d’Ulloa ? ”

“ You are insolent burghers,” said Don Guzman, and rose to go.

“ Sir,” said old Salterne, “ as you say, we are burghers and plain men, and some of us have forgotten ourselves a little, perhaps ; we must beg you to forgive our want of manners, and to put it down to the strength of my wine ; for insolent we never meant to be, especially to a noble gentleman and a foreigner.”

But the Don would not be pacified ; and walked out, calling himself an ass and a blinkard for having demeaned himself to such a company, forgetting that he had brought it on himself.

Salterne (prompted by the great devil Mammon) came up to him next day, and begged pardon again ; promising, moreover, that none of those who had been so rude should be henceforth asked to meet him, if he would deign to honour his house once more. And the Don actually was appeased, and went there the very next evening, sneering at himself the whole time for going.

“ Fool that I am ! that girl has bewitched me, I believe. Go I must, and eat my share of dirt, for her sake.”

So he went ; and, cunningly enough, hinted to old Salterne that he had taken such a fancy to him, and felt so bound by his courtesy and hospitality, that he might not object to tell him things which he would not mention to every one ; for that the Spaniards were not jealous of single traders, but of any general attempt to deprive them of their hard-earned wealth : that, however, in the meanwhile, there were plenty of opportunities for one man here and there to enrich himself, &c.

Old Salterne, shrewd as he was, had his weak point, and the Spaniard had touched it ; and delighted at this opportunity of learning the mysteries of the Spanish monopoly, he often actually set Rose on to draw out the Don, without a fear (so blind does money make men) lest she might be herself drawn in. And so it came to pass, that for weeks and months, the merchant’s house was the Don’s favourite haunt, and he saw the Rose of Torridge daily, and the Rose of Torridge heard him.

And as for her, poor child, she had never seen such a man. He had, or seemed to have, all the high-bred grace of Frank, and yet he was cast in a manlier mould ; he had just enough of his nation’s proud self-assertion to make a woman bow before him as before a superior. He had marvels to tell by flood and field as many and more than Amyas ; and he told them with a grace and an eloquence of which modest, simple, old Amyas possessed nothing.

So though, in time, more ladies than she ; for the country, the north of it at least, was all but bare just then of young gallants, what with the Netherland wars and the Irish wars ; and the Spaniard became soon welcome at every house for many a *mole* round, and made use of his welcome so freely, and received so much unwonted attention from fair young dames, that his head might have been a little turned, and Rose Salterne have thereby escaped, had not Sir Richard delicately given him to understand that in spite of the free and easy manners of English ladies, brothers were just as jealous, and ladies' honours at least as inexpugnable, as in the land of demureness and Duennas. Don Guzman took the hint well enough, and kept on good terms with the country gentlemen as with their daughters ; and to tell the truth, the cunning soldier of fortune found his account in being intimate with all the ladies he could, in order to prevent old Salterne from fancying that he had any peculiar predilection for Mistress Rose.

He had shared, as a lad, in the horrors of the memorable siege of Famagusta, and had escaped, he hardly knew himself how, from the hands of the victorious Turks, and from the certainly (if he escaped being *layed* alive or impaled, as most of the captive officers were) of ending his life as a Janissary at the Sultan's court. He had been at the Battle of the Three Kings ; had seen Stukely borne down by a hundred lances, unconquered even in death ; and had held upon his knee the head of the dying king of Portugal.

And now, as he said to Rose one evening, what had he left on earth, but a heart trampled as hard as the pavement ? • Whom had he to love ? Who loved him ? He had nothing for which to live but fame : and even that was denied to him, a prisoner in a foreign land.

" Had he no kindred, then ? " asked pitying Rose.

" My two sisters are in a convent : they had neither money nor beauty ; so they are dead to me. My brother is a Jesuit, so he is dead to me. My father fell by the hands of Indians in Mexico ; my mother, a penniless widow, is companion, duenna—whatsoever they may choose to call it—carrying fans and lap-dogs for some princess or other there in Seville, of no better blood than herself ; and I—devil ! I have lost even my sword—and so fares the house of De Soto."

Don Guzman of course, intended to be pitied, and pitied he was accordingly. And then he would turn the conversation, and begin telling Italian stories after the Italian fashion, according to his auditory ; the pathetic ones when Rose was present, the racy ones when she was absent.

And so on, and so on. What need of more words.? Before a year was out, Rose Salterne was far more in love with Don Guzman than he with her ; and both suspected each other's mind, though neither hinted at the truth ; she from fear, and he, to tell the truth, from sheer Spanish pride of blood. For he soon began to find out that he must compromise that blood by marrying the heretic burgher's daughter, or his labour would be thrown away. He had seen with much astonishment, and then practised with much pleasure, that graceful old English fashion of saluting every lady on the cheek at meeting. So, one day, he offered his salute in like wise ; but he did it when she was alone ; for something within (perhaps a guilty conscience) whispered that it might be hardly politic to make the proffer in her father's presence : however, to his astonishment, he received a prompt though quiet rebuff.

"No, Sir ; you should know that my cheek is not for you."

"Why," said he, stifling his anger, "it seems free enough to every counter-jumper in the town !"

Was it love ; or simple innocence, which made her answer apologetically ?

"True, Don Guzman ; but they are my equals."

"And I ?"

"You are a nobleman, Sir ; and should recollect that you are one."

"Well," said he, forcing a sneer, "it is a strange taste to prefer the shopkeeper !"

"Prefer ?" said she, forcing a laugh in her turn ; "it is a mere form among us. They are nothing to me, I can tell you."

"And I, then, less than nothing ?"

Rose turned very red ; but she had nerve to answer—

"And why should you be anything to me ? You have condescended too much, Sir, already to us, in giving us many a—many a pleasant evening. You must condescend no further. You wrong yourself, Sir, and me too. No, Sir ; not a step nearer !—I will not ! A salute between equals means nothing ; but between you and me—I vow, Sir, if you do not leave me this moment, I will complain to my father."

"Do so, Madam ! I care as little for your father's anger, as you for my misery."

"Cruel !" cried Rose, trembling from head to foot.

"I love you, Madam !" cried he throwing himself at her feet. "I adore you ! Never mention differences of rank to me more ; for I have forgotten them ; forgotten all but love, all but you, Madam ! My light, my lodestar, my princess, my goddess !"

"Go, Sir!" cried poor Rose, recovering herself suddenly; "and let me never see you more." And, as a last chance for life, she darted out of the room.

"Your slave obeys you, Madam, and kisses your hands and feet for ever and a day," said the cunning Spaniard, and drawing himself up, walked serenely out of the house; while she, poor fool, peeped after him out of her window up-stairs, and her heart sank within her as she watched his jaunty and careless air.

CHAPTER X

HOW EUSTACE LEIGH MET THE POPE'S LEGATE

It is the spring of 1582-3. The grey March skies are curdling hard and high above black mountain peaks. The keen March wind is sweeping harsh and dry across a dreary sheet of bog, still red and yellow with the stains of winter frost. One brown knoll alone breaks the waste, and on it a few leafless wind-clipt oaks stretch their moss-grown arms, like giant hairy spiders, above a desolate pool which crimps and shivers in the biting breeze, while from beside its brink rises a mournful cry, and sweeps down, faint and fitful, amid the howling of the wind.

Along the brink of the bog, picking their road among crumbling rocks and green spongy springs, a company of English soldiers are pushing fast.

Suddenly there is a blood curdling noise.

"Leigh, what noise was that?" said Raleigh.

"An Irish howl, I fancied: but it came from off the bog; it may be only a plover's cry."

"Something not quite right, Sir Captain, to my mind," said the Ancient. "They have ugly stories here of pucks and banshees, and what not of ghosts. There it was again, wailing just like a woman. They say the banshee cried all night before Desmond was slain."

"Perhaps, then, this one may be crying for Ballynglas; for his turn is likely to come next—not that I believe in such old wives' tales."

"Shamus, my man," said Amyas to the guide, "do you hear that cry in the bog?"

The guide put on the most stolid of faces, and answered in broken English:

"Shamus hear nought. Perhaps—what you call him?—fishing in a pool."

"An otter, he means, and I believe he is fight. Stay, no ! Did you not hear it then, Shamus ? It was a woman's voice."

"Shamus is sick in his ears ever since Christmas."

"Shamus will go after Desmond if he lies," said Amyas. "Ancient, we had better send a few men to see what it is ; there may be a poor soul taken by robbers, or perhaps starving to death, as I have seen many a one."

"And I too, poor wretches ; and by no fault of their own or ours either : but if their lords will fall to quarrelling, and then drive each other's cattle, and waste each other's lands, Sir, you know—"

"I know," said Amyas, impatiently ; "why dost not take the men, and go ?"

"Cry you mercy, noble Captain : but—I fear nothing born of women."

"Well, what of that ?" said Amyas, with a smile.

"But these pucks, Sir. The wild Irish do say that they haunt the pools ; and they do no manner of harm, Sir, when you are coming up to them ; but when you are past, Sir, they jump on your back like to apes, Sir,—and who can tackle that manner of fiend ?"

"Why, then, by thine own showing, Ancient," said Raleigh, "thou may'st go and see all safely enough, and then if the puck jumps on thee as thou comest back, just run in with him here, and I'll buy him of thee for a noble ; or thou may'st keep him in a cage and make money in London by showing him for a monster."

"Good heavens forefend, Captain Raleigh ! but you talk rashly ! Lads, who'll follow me ?"

"Thou askest for volunteers, as if thou wert to lead a forlorn hope. Stay ; I'll go myself."

"And I with you," said Raleigh. "As the Queen's true knight-errant, I am bound to be behindhand in no adventure. Who knows but we may find a wicked magician, just going to cut off the head of some saffron-mantled princess ?" and he dismounted.

"Oh, Sirs, Sirs, to endanger your precious—"

"Pooh," said Raleigh. "Come with us, Yeo, the Desmond-slayer, and we will shame the devil, or be shamed by him."

"He may shame me, Sir, but he will never frighten me : " quoth Yeo ; "but the bog, Captains ?"

And the three strode away.

They splashed and scrambled for some quarter of a mile to the knoll, while the cry became louder and louder as they neared.

"That's neither ghost nor otter, Sirs, but a true Irish howl, as

Captain Leigh said ; and I'll warrant Master Shamus knew as much long ago," said Yeo.

And, in fact, they could now hear plainly the "Ochone, Ochonorie," of some wild woman ; and scrambling over the boulders of the knoll, in another minute came full upon her.

She was a young girl, sluttish and unkempt, of course, but fair enough ; her only covering as usual, was the ample yellow mantle. There she sat upon a stone, tearing her black dishevelled hair, and every now and then throwing up her head, and bursting into a long mournful cry.

On her knees lay the head of a man of middle age, in the long soutane of a Romish priest. One look at the attitude of his limbs told them that he was dead.

The two paused in awe ; Yeo, whose nerves were of tougher fibre asked quietly,—

"Shall I go and search the fellow, Captain ?"

"Better, I think," said Amyas.

Raleigh went gently to the girl, and spoke to her in English. She looked up at him, his armour and his plume, with wide and wondering eyes, and then shook her head, and returned to her lamentation.

Raleigh gently laid his hand on her arm, and lifted her up, while Yeo and Amyas bent over the corpse.

It was the body of a large and coarse-featured man : but wasted and shrunk as if by famine to a very skeleton. The hands and legs were cramped up, and the trunk bowed together, as if the man had died of cold or famine. Yeo drew back the clothes from the thin bosom, while the girl screamed and wept, but made no effort to stop him.

"Ask her who it is ? Yeo, you know a little Irish," said Amyas.

He asked, but the girl made no answer. "The stubborn ; de won't tell, of course, Sir."

"Ask her who killed him ?"

"No one, she says ; and I believe she says true, for I can find no wound. The man has been starved, Sirs, as I am a sinful man. God help him, though he is a priest : and yet he seems full enough down below. What's here ? A big pouch, Sirs, stuffed full of somewhat."

"Hand it hither."

The two opened the pouch ; papers, papers, but no scrap of food. Then a parchment. They unrolled it.

"Latin," said Amyas ; "you must construe, Don Scholar."

"Is it possible ?" said Raleigh, after reading a moment.

"This is indeed a prize ! This is Saunders himself !"

Yeo sprang up from the bddy as if he had touched an adder.

"Nick Saunders, the Legacy, Sir?"

"Nicholas Saunders, the Legate."

"The villain! why did not he wait for me have the comfort of killing him? Dog!" and he kicked the corpse with his foot.

"Quiet! quiet! Remember the poor girl," said Amyas, as she shrieked at the profanation, while Raleigh went on, half to himself. "Yes, this is Saunders. Misguided fool, and this is the end! To this thou hast come with thy plotting and thy conspiring, thy lying and thy boasting. Thou hast called on the Heavens to judge between thee and us, and here is their answer!"

He ran his eye through various other documents, written in the usual strain: full of huge promises from the Pope and the King of Spain; frantic and filthy slanders against Elizabeth, Burghley, Leicester, Essex (the elder), Sidney, and every great and good man (never mind of which party) who then upheld the commonweal.

With a gesture of disgust, Raleigh crammed the foul stuff back again into the pouch. Taking it with them, they walked back to the company, and then remounting, marched away once more towards the lands of the Desmonds; and the girl was left alone with the dead.

An hour had passed, when another Englishman was standing by the wailing girl, and round him a dozen shockheaded kernes.

The Englishman was Eustace Leigh; a layman still, but still at his old work. By two years of intrigue and labour from one end of Ireland to the other, he had been trying to satisfy his conscience for rejecting "the higher calling" of the celibate.

There Eustace stood, looking down on all that was left of the most sacred personage of Ireland; the man who, as he once had hoped, was to regenerate his native land, and bring the proud island of the west once more beneath that gentle yoke, in which united Christendom laboured for the commonweal of the universal church.

"Blest Saunders!" murmured Eustace Leigh; "let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!"

The corpse was buried; a few prayers said hastily; and Eustace Leigh was away again, not now to find Baltinglas; for it was more than his life was worth. The girl had told him of the English soldiers who had passed, and he knew that they would reach the earl probably before he did. The game was up; all was lost. So he retraced his steps, as a desperate resource, to the last place where he would be looked for; and after a month of disguising, hiding, and other expedients, found himself again in his native

county of Devon, while Fitz-Eustace Viscount Baltinglas had taken ship for Spain.

"And now let us return to Raleigh and Amyas, as they jog along their weary road. They have many things to talk of ; for it is but three days' since they met.

"Have you heard of my brother Humphrey's new project ?" asked Raleigh.

"How should I hear anything in this waste howling wilderness ?"

"Kiss hands to the wilderness then, and come with me to Newfoundland !"

"You to Newfoundland ?"

"Yes, I to Newfoundland, unless my little matter here is settled at once. Gloriana don't know it, and shan't till I'm off. She'd send me to the Tower, I think, if she caught me playing truant. I could hardly get leave to come hither ; but I must out, and try my fortune. I am over ears in debt already, and sick of courts and courtiers. Humphrey must go next spring and take possession of his kingdom beyond seas, or his patent expires ; and with him I go, and you too, my circumnavigating giant."

And then Raleigh expounded to Amyas the details of the great Newfoundland scheme.

Amyas simple fellow, took all in greedily ; he knew enough of the dangers of the Magellan passage to appreciate the boundless value of a road to the East Indies which would save half the distance.

"Manoa ?" asked Raleigh, who had heard, as most had, dim rumours of the place. "What do you know of it ?"

Whereon Amyas told him all that he had gathered from the Spaniard ; and Raleigh, in his turn, believed every word.

"Humph !" said he after a long silence. "To find that Golden Emperor ; offer him help and friendship from the Queen of England ; defend him against the Spaniards ; if we became strong enough, conquer back all Peru from the Popish tyrants, and reinstate him on the throne of the Incas, with ourselves for his body-guard.—Hey, Amyas ? You would make a gallant chieftain. We'll do it, lad !"

"We'll try : " said Amyas ; " but we must be quick, for there's one Berreo sworn to carry out the quest to the death ; and if the Spaniards once get thither, their plan of works will be much more like Pizarro's than like yours ; and by the time we come, there will be neither gold nor city left."

"Nor Indians either, I'll warrant the butchers ; but, lad I am promised to Humphrey ; I have a bark fitting out already,

and all I have, and more adventured in her :—so Manoa must wait."

"It will wait well enough, if the Spaniards prosper no better on the Amazon than they have done ; but must I come with you ? To tell the truth I am quite shore-sick, and to sea I must go. What will my mother say ?"

"I'll manage thy mother," said Raleigh ; and so he did ; for, to cut a long story short, he went back the month after, and he not only took home letters from Amyas to his mother, but so impressed on that good lady the enormous profits and honours to be derived from Meta Incognita, and (which was most true) the advantage to any young man of sailing with such a general as Humphrey Gilbert, most pious and most learned of seamen and of cavaliers, beloved and honoured above all his compeers by Queen Elizabeth that she consented to Amyas's adventuring in the voyage some two hundred pounds which had come to him as his share of prize-money, after the ever memorable circumnavigation. For Mrs. Leigh, be it understood, was no longer at Burrough Court. By Frank's persuasion, she had let the old place, moved up to London with her eldest son, and taken for herself a lodging somewhere by Palace Stairs, which looked out upon the silver Thames (for Thames was silver then), with its busy ferries and gliding boats, across to the pleasant fields of Lambeth, and the Archbishop's Palace, and the wooded Surrey hills ; and there she spent her peaceful days, close to her Frank and to the Court.

Those two years, and the one which followed, were the happiest which she had known since her husband's death. But the cloud was coming fast up the horizon, though she saw it not. A little longer, and the sun would be hid for many a wintry day.

Amyas went to Plymouth, (with Yeo, of course, at his heels), and there beheld, for the first time, the majestic countenance of the philosopher of Compton Castle. He lodged with Drake, and found him not over-sanguine as to the success of the voyage.

"For learning and manners, Amyas, there's not his equal ; and the Queen may well love him, and Devon be proud of him, but book-learning is not business ; book-learning didn't get me round the world ; book-learning didn't make Captain Hawkins, nor his father neither, the best ship-builders from Hull to Cadi ; and book-learning, I very much fear, won't plant Newfoundland."

However, the die was cast, and the little fleet of five sail assembled in Cawsand Bay. Amyas was to go as a gentleman adventurer on board Raleigh's bark ; Raleigh himself however, at the eleventh hour, had been forbidden by the Queen to leave England.

"Who would not die for such a woman ?" said Sir Humphrey.

"Who would not? But she bids you rather live for her."

"I shall do both, young man; and for God too, I trust. We are going in God's cause; we go for the honour of God's Gospel, for the deliverance of poor infidels led captive by the devil; for the relief of my distressed countrymen unemployed within this narrow isle; and to God we commit our cause."

Some say that Raleigh himself came down to Plymouth, accompanied the fleet a day's sail to sea, and would have given her Majesty the slip, and gone with them Westward-ho, but for Sir Humphrey's advice. It is likely enough: but I cannot find evidence for it. At all events, on the 11th June the fleet sailed out, having in "number about 260 men, among whom we had of every faculty good choice, as shipwrights, masons, carpenters, smiths, and such like, requisite for such an action; also mineral men and refiners."

The sailors had been picked up hastily and anywhere, and soon proved themselves a mutinous, and, in the case of the bark *Swallow*, a piratical set. The mechanics were little better. The gentlemen-adventurers, puffed up with vain hopes of finding a new Mexico, became soon disappointed and surly at the hard practical reality; while over all was the head of a sage and an enthusiast, a man too noble to suspect others, and too pure to make allowances for poor dirty human weaknesses. He had got his scheme perfect upon paper; well for him, and for his company, if he had asked Francis Drake to translate it for him into fact! As early as the second day, the seeds of failure began to sprout above ground. The men of Raleigh's bark, the *Vice-Admiral*, suddenly found themselves seized, or supposed themselves seized, with a contagious sickness, and at midnight forsook the fleet, and went back to Plymouth.

But Amyas said much. He told Butler the captain plainly that, if the bark went back, he would not; that he had seen enough of ships deserting their consorts; that it should never be said of him that he had followed Winter's example, and that, too, on a fair easterly wind; and finally, that he had seen Doughty hanged for trying to play such a trick, and that he might see others hanged too before he died. Whereon Captain Butler offered to draw and fight, to which Amyas showed no repugnance; whereon the captain, having taken a second look at Amyas's thews and sinews, reconsidered the matter, and offered to put Amyas on board *Sir Humphrey's Delight*, if he could find a crew to row him.

Amyas looked round.

"Are there any of Sir Francis Drake's men on board?"

"Three, Sir," said Yeo. "Robert Drew, and two others."

"Pelicans !" roared Amyas, "you have been round the world, and will you turn back from Westward-ho ?"

There was a moment's silence, and then Drew came forward.

"Lower us a boat, captain, and lend us a caliver to make signals with, while I get my kit on deck ; I'll after Captain Leigh, if I row him aboard all alone to my own hands."

"If I ever command a ship, I will not forget you," said Amyas.

Nor us either, Sir, we hope ; for we haven't forgotten you and your honest conditions," said both the other Pelicans ; and so away over the side went all the five, and pulled away after the admiral's lantern, firing shots at intervals as signals. Luckily for the five desperadoes, the night was all but calm. They got on board before the morning, and so away into the boundless West.

CHAPTER XI

HOW BIDEFORD BRIDGE DINED AT ANNERY HOUSE

EVERY year, a dinner was held by the trustees of Bideford Bridge. At the dinner held in 1583, an argument arose which resulted in an extra special banquet being given three days later by a Mr. St. Leger. All the notables of the town and surroundings were invited.

So there was a mighty feast in the great hall at Annery, such as had seldom been since Judge Hankford feasted Edward the Fourth there ; and while every one was eating their best, and drinking their worst, Rose Salterne and Don Guzman were pretending not to see each other, and watching each other all the more. But Rose at least had to be very careful of her glances ; for not only was her father at the table, but just opposite her sat none other than Messrs. William Cary and Arthur St. Leger, Lieutenants in her Majesty's Irish army, who had returned on furlough a few days before.

Rose Salterne and the Spaniard had not exchanged a word in the last six months, though they had met many times. The Spaniard by no means avoided her company, except in her father's house ; he only took care to obey her carefully, by seeming always unconscious of her presence, beyond the stateliest of salutes at entering and departing. But he took care, at the same time, to lay himself out to the very best advantage whenever he was in her presence ; to be more witty, more eloquent, more romantic, more full of wonderful tales than he ever yet had been. The cunning Don had found himself foiled in his first tactic ; and he was now trying another, and a far more formidable one. In the first place Rose

deserved a very severe punishment for having dared to refuse the love of a Spanish nobleman; and what greater punishment could he inflict than withdrawing the honour of his attentions ?

So he quietly and unobtrusively showed her that he could do without her ; and she, poor fool, as she was meant to do, began to ask herself—why ? What was the hidden treasure, what was the reserve force, which made him independent of her, while she could not say that she was independent of him ? Had he a secret ? how pleasant to know it ! Some huge ambition ? how pleasant to share in it ! Some mysterious knowledge ? how pleasant to learn it ! And so, step by step, she was being led to sue in formâ pauperis to the very man whom she had spurned when he sued in like form to her.

And Rose was utterly tired of that same mask as she sat at table at Annery that day ; and Don Guzman saw it in her uneasy and downcast looks, and thinking (conceited coxcomb) that she must be by now sufficiently punished, stole a glance at her now and then, and was not abashed when he saw that she dropped her eyes when they met his. So he pretended to be as much downcast and abstracted as she was, and went on with his glances, till he once found her, poor thing, looking at him to see if he was looking at her ; and then he knew his prey was safe, and asked her, with his eyes, “ Do you forgive me ? ” and saw her stop dead in her talk to her next neighbour, and falter, and drop her eyes, and raise them again after a minute in search of his, that he might repeat the pleasant question. And then what could she do but answer with all her face, and every bend of her pretty neck, “ And do you forgive me in turn ? ”

Whereon Don Guzman broke out jubilant, like nightingale on bough, with story, and jest, and repartee ; and became forthwith the soul of the whole company, and the most charming of all cavaliers. And poor Rose knew that she was the cause of his sudden change of mood, and blamed herself for what she had done, and shuddered and blushed at her own delight.

It was a beautiful sight, the great terrace at Annery that afternoon ; with the smart dames in their gaudy dresses parading up and down in two and threes before the stately house ; or looking down upon the park. All chatted, and laughed, and eyed each other's dresses, and gossiped about each other's husbands and servants : only Rose Salterne kept apart.

“ Our pretty Rose seems sad,” said Lady Grenville, coming up to her. “ Cheer up, child ! we want you to come and sing to us.”

Rose answered she knew not what, and obeyed mechanically.

She took the lute, and sat down on a bench beneath the house, while the rest grouped themselves round her.

"What shall I sing?"

"Let us have your old song, 'Earl Haldane's Daughter.'"

As she ceased, a voice, with a foreign accent, thrilled through her.

In the East, they say the nightingale sings to the rose ; Devon, more happy, has nightingale and rose in one."

"We have no nightingales in Devon, Don Guzman, said Lady Grenville ; "but our little forest thrushes sing, as you hear, sweetly enough to content any ear. But what brings you away from the gentlemen so early?"

"These letters," said he, "which have been just put into my hand ; and as they call me home to Spain, I was loth to lose a moment of that delightful company from which I must part so soon."

"To Spain?" asked half-a-dozen voices : for the Don was a general favourite.

"Yes, and thence to the Indies. My ransom has arrived, and with it the promise of an office. I am to be Governor of La Guayra in Caraccas. Congratulate me on my promotion."

A mist was over Rose's eyes. The Spaniard's voice was hard and flippant. Did he care for her after all? And if he did, was it not nevertheless hopeless?

In the meanwhile, as it was ordained, Cary could see and hear through the window of the hall a good deal of what was going on.

"How that Spanish crocodile ogles the Rose!" whispered he to young St. Leger.

"What wonder? He is not the first by many a one."

"Ay—but—By heaven, she is making side-shots at him with those languishing eyes of hers, the little baggage!"

"What wonder? He is not the first, say I, and won't be the last. Pass the wine, man."

"I have had enough : between sack and singing, my head is as mazed as a dizzy sheep. Let me slip out."

"Not yet, man ; remember you are bound for one song more."

So Cary, against his will, sat and sang another song ; and in the meanwhile the party had broken up, and wandered away by twos and threes, among trim gardens and pleasantries.

At last Cary got away and out ; sober, but just enough flushed with wine to be ready for any quarrel ; and luckily for him, had not gone twenty yards along the great terrace before he met Lady Grenville.

"Has your Ladyship seen Don Guzman?"

"Yes—why where is he?" He was with me not ten minutes ago. You know he is going back to Spain."

"Going! Has his ransom come?"

"Yes, and with it a governorship in the Indies."

"Governorship? Much good may it do the governed."

"Why not, then? He is surely a most gallant gentleman."

"Gallant enough—yes," said Cary, carelessly. "I must find him, and congratulate him on his honours."

"I will help you to find him," said Lady Grenville, whose woman's eye and ear had already suspected something. "Escort me, Sir."

"It is but too great an honour to squire the Queen of Bideford," said Cary, offering his hand.

"If I am your queen, Sir, I must be obeyed," answered she in a meaning tone. Cary took the hint, and went on chattering cheerfully enough.

But Don Guzman was not to be found in garden or in pleasance.

"Perhaps," at last said a burgher's wife, with a toss of her head, "your Ladyship may meet with him at Hankford's oak."

"At Hankford's oak? what should take him there?"

"Pleasant company, I reckon;" (with another toss.) "I heard him and Mistress Salterne talking about the oak just now."

Cary turned pale, and drew in his breath.

"Very likely," said Lady Grenville, quietly. "Will you walk with me so far, Mr. Cary?"

"To the world's end, if your Ladyship condescends so far." And off they went, Lady Grenville wishing that they were going anywhere else, but afraid to let Cary go alone; and suspicious, too, that some one or other ought to go.

When they approached the oak, Cary grasped Lady Grenville's hand so tightly that she gave a little shriek of pain.

"There they are!" whispered he, heedless of her; and pointed to the oak, where, half-hidden by the tall fern, stood Rose and the Spaniard.

Her head was on his bosom. She seemed sobbing, trembling; he talking earnestly and passionately, but Lady Grenville's little shriek made them both look up. To turn and try to escape was to confess all; and the two, collecting themselves instantly, walked towards her, Rose wishing herself fathoms deep beneath the earth.

"Mind, Sir," whispered Lady Grenville as they came up; you have seen nothing."

WESTWARD HO !

"Madam ?"

"If you are not on my ground, you are on my brother's. Obey me !"

Cary bit his lip, and bowed courteously to the Don.

"I have to congratulate you, I hear, Señor, on your approaching departure."

"I kiss your hands, Señor, in return : but I question whether it be a matter of congratulation, considering all that I leave behind."

"So do I," answered Cary, bluntly enough, and the four walked back to the house, Lady Grenville taking everything for granted with the most charming good humour, and chatting to her three silent companions till they gained the terrace once more, and found four or five of the gentlemen, with Sir Richard at their head, proceeding to the bowling-green.

Lady Grenville in an agony of fear about the quarrel which she knew must come, would have gladly whispered five words to her husband : but she dared not do it before the Spaniard, and dreaded too a faint or a scream from the Rose, whose father was of the party. So she walked on with her fair prisoner, commanding Cary to escort them in, and the Spaniard to go to the bowling green.

Cary obeyed : but he gave her the slip the moment she was inside the door, and then darted off to the gentlemen.

His heart was on fire : all his old passion for the Rose had flashed up again at the sight of her with a lover—and that lover a Spaniard ! He would cut his throat for him if steel could do it ! Only he recollected that Salterne was there, and shrank from exposing Rose ; and shrank, too, as every gentleman should, from making a public quarrel in another man's house. Never mind. Where there was a will there was a way. He could get him into a corner, and quarrel with him privately about the cut of his beard, or the colour of his ribbon. So in he went ; and luckily, or unluckily, found standing together apart from the rest, Sir Richard, the Don, and young St. Leger.

"Well, Don Guzman, you have given us wine-bibbers the slip this afternoon. I hope you have been well employed in the meanwhile ?"

"Delightfully to myself, Señor," said the Don, who, enraged at being interrupted, if not discovered, was as ready to fight as Cary, "and to others, I doubt not."

"So the ladies say," quoth St. Leger. "He has been making them all cry with one of his stories, and robbing us meanwhile of the pleasure we had hoped for from some of his Spanish songs."

"The devil take Spanish songs ! " said Cary, in a low voice, but loud enough for the Spaniard. Don Guzman clapt his hand on his sword-hilt instantly.

"Lieutenant Cary," said Sir Richard in a stern voice ; " the wine has surely made you forget yourself ! "

"As sober as yourself, most worshipful knight ; but if you want a Spanish song, here's one ; and a very scurvy one it is, like its subject—"

"Don Desparado
Walked on the Prado,
And there he met his enemy.
He pulled out his knife, a
And let out his life, a,
And fled for his own across the sea."

And he bowed low to the Spaniard.

The insult was too gross to require any spluttering.

"Señor Cary, we meet ? "

"I thank your quick apprehension, Don Guzman Maria Magdalena Sotomayor de Soto ! When, where, and with what weapons ? "

"For God's sake, gentlemen ! Nephew Arthur, Cary is your guest ; do you know the meaning of this ? "

St. Leger was silent. Cary answered for him.

"An old Irish quarrel, I assure you, Sir. A matter of years' standing. In unlacing the Señor's helmet, the evening that he was taken prisoner, I was unlucky enough to twitch his mustachios. You recollect the fact, of course, Señor ? "

"Perfectly," said the Spaniard ; and then, half-amused and half-pleased, in spite of his bitter wrath, at Cary's quickness and delicacy in shielding Rose, he bowed, and—

"And it gives me much pleasure to find that he whom I trust have the pleasure of killing to-morrow morning, is a gentleman whose nice sense of honour renders him thoroughly worthy of the sword of a De Soto."

Cary bowed in return, while Sir Richard, who saw plainly enough that the excuse was feigned, shrugged his shoulders.

"What weapons, Señor ? " asked Will again.

"I should have preferred a horse and pistols," said Don Guzman after a moment, half to himself, and in Spanish ; " they make surer work of it than bodkins ; " but (with a sigh and one of his smiles) "beggars must not be choosers."

"The best horse in my stable is at your service, Señor," said Sir Richard Grenville instantly.

"And in mine also, Señor," said Cary ; " and I shall be happy

to allow you a week to train him, if he does not answer at first to a Spanish hand."

"You forget in your courtesy, gentle Sir, that the insult being with me, the time lies with me also. We wipe it off to-morrow morning with simple rapiers and daggers. Who is your second?"

"Mr. Arthur St. Leger, here, Señor: who is yours?"

The Spaniard felt himself alone in the world for one moment; and then answered with another of his smiles.

"Your nation possesses the soul of honour. He who fights an Englishman needs no second."

"And he who fights among Englishmen will always find one," said Sir Richard. "I am the fittest second for my guest."

"You only add one more obligation, illustrious cavalier, to a two years' prodigality of favours, which I shall never be able to repay."

"But, Nephew Arthur," said Grenville, "you cannot surely be second against your father's guest, and your own uncle."

"I cannot help it, Sir; I am bound by an oath, as Will can tell you. I suppose you won't think it necessary to let me blood?"

"You half deserve it, sirrah!" said Sir Richard, who was very angry: but the Don interposed quickly.

"Heaven forbid, Señors! We are no French duelists, who are mad enough to make four or six lives answer for the sins of two. This gentleman and I have quarrelled enough between us, I suspect, to make a right bloody encounter."

"The dependence is good enough, Sir," said Cary, licking his sinful lips at the thought. "Very well. Rapiers and shirts at three to-morrow morning—Is that the bill of fare? Ask Sir Richard where, Atty? It is against punctilio now for me to speak to him till after I am killed."

"On the sands opposite. The tide will be out at three. And now, gallant gentlemen, let us join the bowlers."

And so they went back and spent a merry evening, all except poor Rose, who, ere she went back, had poured all her sorrows into Lady Granville's ear. For the kind woman, knowing that she was motherless and guileless, carried her off into Mrs. St. Leger's chamber, and there entreated her to tell the truth, and heaped her with pity, but with no comfort.

* * * * *

Three o'clock, upon a still pure bright Midsummer morning. The air is full of perfume; sweet clover, new mown hay, the dainty scent of sea-weed wreaths and fresh wet sand. Glorious day, glorious place—What do those four cloaked figures there by

the river brink, a dark spot on the fair face of the summer morn ? ”

Yet one is as cheerful as if he too, like all nature round him, were going to a wedding ; and that is Will Cary. He has been bathing down below, to cool his brain and steady his hand ; and he intends to stop Don Guzman Maria Magdalena Sotomayor de Soto's wooing for ever and a day. The Spaniard is in a very different mood ; fierce and haggard, he is pacing up and down the sand. He intends to kill Will Cary : but then ? Will he be the nearer to Rose by doing so ? Can he stay in Bideford ? Will she go with him ? Shall he stoop to stain his family by marrying a burgher's daughter ? It is a confused, all but desperate business ; and Don Guzman is certain but of one thing, that he is madly in love with this fair witch, and that if she refuse him, then, rather than see her accept another man, he would kill her with his own hands.

Sir Richard Grenville too is in no very pleasant humour, as St. Leger soon discovers, when the two seconds begin whispering over their arrangements.

“ We cannot have either of them killed, Arthur.”

“ Mr. Cary swears he will kill the Spaniard, Sir.”

“ He shan't. The Spaniard is my guest. I am answerable for him to Leigh, and for his ransom too. And how can Leigh accept the ransom if the man is not given up safe and sound ? They won't pay for a dead carcase, boy ! The man's life is worth two hundred pounds.”

“ A very bad bargain, Sir, for those who pay the said two hundred for the rascal ; but what if he kills Cary ? ”

“ Worse still. Cary must not be killed. I am very angry with him, but he is too good a lad to be lost ; and his father would never forgive us. We must strike up their swords at the first scratch.”

“ It will make them very mad, Sir.”

“ Hang them ! let them fight us then, if they don't like our counsel. It must be, Arthur.”

“ Be sure, Sir,” said Arthur, “ that whatsoever you shall command I shall perform. It is only too great an honour to a young man as I am, to find myself in the same dual with your worship and to have the advantage of your wisdom and experience.”

Sir Richard smiles and says—“ Now, gentlemen ! are you ready ? ”

The Spaniard pulls out a little crucifix, and kisses it devoutly, smiting on his breast ; crosses himself two or three times, and says

Most willingly, Señor.”

Cary kisses no crucifix, but, says a prayer nevertheless.

Cloaks and doublets are tossed off, the men placed, the rapiers measured hilt and point ; Sir Richard and St. Leger place themselves right and left of the combatants, facing each other, the points of their drawn swords on the sand. Cary and the Spaniard stand for a moment quite upright, their sword-arms stretched straight before them, holding the long rapier horizontally, the left hand clutching the dagger close to their breasts. So they stand eye to eye. Suddenly there is a quick turn of Cary's wrist and a leap forward. The Spaniard's dagger flashes, and the rapier is turned aside ; Cary springs six feet back as the Spaniard rushes on him in turn. Parry, thrust, parry—the steel rattles, the sparks fly, the men breathe fierce and loud ; the devil's game is begun in earnest.

Yes ! the Spaniard's rapier passes under Cary's left arm ; he bleeds.

"A hit ! a hit ! Strike up, Atty !" and the swords are struck up instantly.

Cary, nettled by the smart, tries to close with his foe, but the seconds cross their swords before him.

"It is enough, gentlemen. Don Guzman's honour is satisfied !"

"But not my revenge, Señor," says the Spaniard, with a frown. "This duel is *à l'outrance*, on my part ; and, I believe, on Mr. Cary's also."

"By heaven it is !" says Will, trying to push past. "Let me go, Arthur St. Leger ; one of us must down. Let me go, I say !"

"If you stir, Mr. Cary, you have to do with Richard Grenville !" thunders the lion voice.

Cary stops sulkily.

"You do not know all, Sir Richard, or you would not speak in this way."

"I do, Sir, all : and I shall have the honour of talking it over with Don Guzman myself."

"Hey ?" said the Spaniard. "You came here as my second, Sir Richard, as I understood : but not as my counsellor."

"Arthur, take your man away ! Cary ! obey me as you would your father, Sir ! Can you not trust Richard Grenville ?"

"Come away, for God's sake !" says poor Arthur, dragging Cary's sword from him ; "Sir Richard must know best !"

So Cary is led off sulking, and Sir Richard turns to the Spaniard.

"And now, Don Guzman, allow me, though much against my will, to speak to you as a friend to a friend. You will pardon me if I say that I cannot but have seen last night's devotion to——"

"You will be pleased, Señor, not to mention the name of any lady to whom I may have shown devotion."

"Well, Señor, if you take offence, you take that which is not given. Only I warn you, with all apologies for any seeming forwardness, that the quest on which you seem to be, is one on which you will not be allowed to proceed."

"And who will stop me?" asked the Spaniard with a fierce oath.

"You are not aware, illustrious Señor," said Sir Richard, parrying the question. "that our English laity look upon mixed marriages with full as much dislike as your own ecclesiastics."

"Marriage, Sir? Who gave you leave to mention that word to me?"

Sir Richard's brow darkened; the Spaniard, in his insane pride, had forced upon the good knight a suspicion which was not really just.

"Is it possible, then, Señor Don Guzman, that I am to have the shame of mentioning a baser word?"

"Mention what you will, Sir. All words are the same to me; for, just or unjust, I shall answer them alike only by my sword."

"You will do no such thing, Sir. You forget that I am your host."

"And do you suppose that you have therefore a right to insult me? Stand on your guard, Sir!"

Grenville answered by slapping his own rapier home into the sheath with a quiet smile.

"Señor Don Guzman must be well enough aware of who Richard Grenville is, to know that he may claim the right of refusing duel to any man, if he shall so think fit."

"Sir!" cried the Spaniard with an oath, "this is too much! Do you dare to hint that I am unworthy of your sword? Know insolent Englishman, I am not merely a De Soto,—though that, by St. James, were enough for you or any man. I a Sotomayor, a Mendoza, a Vovadilla, a Losada——Sir! I have blood royal in my veins, and you dare to refuse my challenge?"

"Richard Grenville can show quarterings, probably, against even Don Guzman Maria Magdalena Sotomayor de Soto, or against (with no offence to the unquestioned nobility of your pedigree) the bluest blood of Spain. But he can show, moreover, thank God, a reputation which raises him as much above the imputation of cowardice, as it does above that of discourtesy. If you think fit, Señor, to forget what you have just, in very excusable anger, vented, and to return with me, you will find

me still, as ever, your most faithful servant and host. If otherwise, you have only to name whither you wish your mails to be sent, and I shall, with unfeigned sorrow, obey your commands concerning them."

The Spaniard bowed stiffly, answered, "To the nearest tavern, Señor," and then strode away. His baggage was sent thither. He took a boat down to Appledore that very afternoon, and vanished, none knew whither. A very courteous note to Lady Grenville, enclosing the jewel which he had been used to wear round his neck, was the only memorial he left behind him : except indeed, the scar on Cary's arm, and poor Rose's broken heart.

Now county towns are scandalous places at best ; and though all parties tried to keep the duel secret, yet, of course, before noon all Bideford knew what had happened, and a great deal more ; and what was even worse, Rose, in an agony of terror, had seen Sir Richard Grenville enter her father's private room, and sit there closeted with him for an hour and more ; and when he went, upstairs came old Salterne, with his stick in his hand, and after rating her soundly for far worse than a flirt, gave her (I am sorry to have to say it, but such was the mild fashion of paternal rule in those times, even over such daughters as Lady Jane Grey, if Roger Ascham is to be believed) such a beating that her poor sides were black and blue for many a day ; and then, putting her on a pillion behind him, carried her off twenty miles to her old prison at Stow Mill.

CHAPTER XII

HOW THE GOLDEN HIND CAME HOME AGAIN

MRS. HAWKINS sat in her low oak-panelled room in Plymouth town. I know not why she opened her heart that night to Adrian Gilbert, with a frankness which she would hardly have dared to use to her own family. Perhaps it was that Adrian, like his great brothers, Humphrey and Raleigh, was a man full of all lofty and delicate enthusiasms, tender and poetical, such as women cling to when their hearts are lonely ; but so it was ; and Adrian, half ashamed of his own ambitious dreams, sat looking at her awhile in silence ; and then—

"The Lord be with you, dearest Lady. Strange, how you women sit at home to love and suffer, while we men rush forth to break our hearts and yours against rocks of our own seeking ! Ah well ! were it not for Scripture, I should have thought that

Adam, rather than Eve, had been the one who plucked the fruit of the forbidden tree."

"We women, I fear, did the deed nevertheless ; for we bear the doom of it our lives long."

"You always remind me, Madam, of my dear Mrs. Leigh of Burrough, and her counsels."

"Do you see her often ? I hear of her as one of the Lord's most precious vessels."

"I would have done more ere now than see her," said he with a blush, "had she allowed me : but she lives only for the memory of her husband and the fame of her noble sons."

As he spoke the door opened, and in walked, wrapped in his rough sea-gown, none other than one of those said noble sons.

Adrian turned pale.

"Amyas Leigh ! What brings you hither ? How fares my brother ? Where is the ship ?"

"Your brother is well, Mr. Gilbert. The Golden Hind is gone on to Dartmouth, with Mr. Hayes. I came ashore here, meaning to go north to Fife, ere I went to London. I called at Drake's just now, but he was away."

"The Golden Hind ? What brings her home so soon ?"

"Yet welcome ever, Sir," said Mrs. Hawkins. "This is a great surprise, though. Captain John did not look for you till next year."

Amyas was silent.

"Something is wrong !" cried Adrian. "Speak !"

Amyas tried, but could not.

"Will you drive a man mad, Sir ? Has the adventure failed ? You said my brother was well."

"He is well."

"Then what—Why do you look at me in that fashion, Sir ?" and springing up, Adrian rushed forward, and held the candle to Amyas's face.

Amyas's lip quivered, as he laid his hand on Adrian's shoulder.

"Your great and glorious brother, Sir, is better bestowed than in settling Newfoundland."

"Dead ?" shrieked Adrian.

"He is with the God whom he served !"

"He was always with him, like Enoch : parable me no parables, if you love me, Sir !"

"And, like Enoch, he was not ; for God took him."

Adrian clasped his hands, over his forehead, and leaned against the table.

"Go on, Sir, go on. God will give me strength to hear all."

And gradually Amyas opened to Adrian that tragic story of the unruliness of the men, ruffians, as I said before, caught up at hap-hazard ; of conspiracies to carry off the ships, plunder of fishing vessels, desertions multiplying daily ; licences from the General to the lazy and fearful to return home till Adrian broke out with a groan—

“ From him ? Conspired against him ? Deserted from him ? Dotards, buzzards ? Where would they have found such another leader ? ”

“ Your illustrious brother, Sir,” said Amyas, “ if you will pardon me, was a very great philosopher, but not so much of a general.”

“ General, Sir ? Where was braver man ? ”

“ Not on God’s earth : but that does not make a general, Sir. If Cortes had been brave and no more, Mexico would have been Mexico still. The truth is, Sir, Cortes, like my Captain Drake, knew when to hang a man ; and your great brother did not.”

Amyas, as I suppose, was right. Gilbert was a man who could be angry enough at baseness or neglect, but who was too kindly to punish it.

Then Amyas went on to tell the rest of his story ; the setting sail from St. John’s to discover the southward coast : Sir Humphrey’s chivalrous determination to go in the little Squirrel of only ten tons, and “ overcharged with nettings, fights, and small ordnance,” not only because she was more fit to examine the creeks, but because he had heard of some taunt against him among the men, that he was afraid of the sea.

After that, woe on woe ; how, seven days after they left Cape Raz, their largest ship, the Delight, after she had struck upon unknown shoals ; where were lost all but fourteen, and those who escaped, after all horrors of cold and famine, were cast on shore in Newfoundland. How, worn out with hunger and want of clothes, the crews of the two remaining ships persuaded Sir Humphrey to sail toward England on the 31st of August.

Then Amyas told the last scene ; how, when they were off the Azores, the storms came on heavier than ever, with “ terrible seas, breaking short and pyramid-wise,” till, on the 9th September, the tiny Squirrel nearly foundered and yet recovered ; “ and the General, sitting abaft with a book in his hand, cried out to us in the Hind so oft as we did approach within hearing, ‘ We are as near heaven by sea as by land,’ reiterating the same speech, well beseeming a soldier resolute in Jesus Christ, as I can testify he was.

“ The same Monday, about twelve of the clock, or not long after, the frigate (the Squirrel) being ahead of us in the Golden

Hind, suddenly her lights were out ; and withal our watch cried, the General was cast away, which was true ; for in that moment, the frigate was devoured and swallowed up of the sea." And so ended Amyas Leigh's story.

"Oh, my brother ! my brother !" moaned poor Adrian ; "the glory of his house, the glory of Devon !"

"Ah ! what will the Queen say ?" asked Mrs. Hawkins through her tears.

"Tell me," asked Adrian, "had he the jewel on when he died ?"

"The Queen's jewel ? He always wore that, and his own posy too. He wore it ; and he lived it."

"Ay," said Adrian, "the same to the last !"

And so the talk ended. There was no doubt that the expedition had been an utter failure ; Adrian was a ruined man ; and Amyas had lost his venture.

Adrian rose, and begged leave to retire ; he must collect himself.

"Poor gentleman !" said Mrs. Hawkins ; "it is little else he has left to collect."

"Or I either," said Amyas. "I was going to ask you to lend me one of your son's shirts, and five pounds to get myself and my men home."

"Five ? Fifty, Mr. Leigh ! God forbid that John Hawkins's wife should refuse her last penny to a distressed mariner, and he a gentleman born. But you must eat and drink."

"It's more than I have done for many a day worth speaking of."

And Amyas sat down in his rags to a good supper, while Mrs. Hawkins told him all the news which she could of his mother, whom Adrian Gilbert had seen a few months before in London ; and then went on, naturally enough, to the Bideford news.

"And by the bye, Captain Leigh, I've sad news for you from your place ; and I had it from one who was there at the time. You must know a Spanish captain, a prisoner—"

"What, the one I sent home from Smarwick ?"

"You sent ? Mercy on us ! Then, perhaps, you've heard—"

"How can I have heard ? What ?"

"That he's gone off, the villain !"

"Without paying his ransom ?"

"I can't say that ; but there's a poor innocent young maid gone off with him, one Salterne's daughter—the Popish serpent !"

"Rose Salterne, the mayor's daughter, the Rose of Torridge !"

"That's her. Bless her dear soul, what ails you ?"

Amyas had dropped back in his seat as if he had been shot : but he recovered himself before kind Mrs. Hawkins could rush to the cupboard for cordials.

" You'll forgive me, Madam ; but I'm weak from the sea ; and your good ale has turned me a bit dizzy, I think."

" Ay, yes, 'tis too, too heavy, till you've been on shore awhile. Try the aqua vitæ ; my Captain John has it right good ; and a bit too fond of it, too, poor dear soul, between whiles.¹ Heaven forgive him !"

So she poured some strong brandy and water down Amyas's throat, in spite of his refusals, and sent him to bed, but not to sleep ; and after a night of tossing, he started for Bideford, having obtained the means for so doing from Mrs. Hawkins.

CHAPTER XIII

HOW SALVATION YEO SLEW THE KING OF THE GUBBINGS

NOW I am sorry to say, for the honour of my country, that it was by no means a safe thing in those days to travel from Plymouth to the north of Devon ; because, to get to your journey's end, unless you were minded to make a circuit of many miles, you must needs pass through the territory of a foreign and hostile potentate, who had many times ravaged the dominions, and defeated the forces of her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, and was named the King of the Gubbings.

During our civil wars no soldiers were quartered upon them, for fear of being quartered amongst them. Their wealth consisteth in other men's goods ; they live by stealing the sheep on the moors. Such is their fleetness, they will outrun many horses ; vivaciousness, they outlive most men ; living in an ignorance of luxury, the extinguisher of life. They hold together like bees ; offend one, and all will revenge his quarrel.

One day, Amyas, in fear of these heathens, rode out of Plymouth on a right good horse, in his full suit of armour, carrying lance and sword, and over and above two horse-pistols ; and behind him Salvation Yeo, and five or six north Devon men (who had served with him in Ireland, and were returning on furlough), clad in head-pieces and quilted jerkins, each man with his pike and sword, and Yeo with arquebuse and match, while two ponies carried the baggage of this formidable troop.

They pushed on as fast as they could, through Tavistock, to reach before nightfall Lydford, where they meant to sleep but :

what with buying the horses, and other delays, they had not been able to start before noon ; and night fell just as they reached the frontiers of the enemy's country. A dreary place enough it was.

On the middle of the down stood a wayside inn ; a desolate and villainous-looking lump of lichen-spotted granite, with windows paper-patched, and rotting thatch kept down by stones and strawbands. At the door, watching which way the sheep on the moor were taking, stood the inn-keeper, a brawny, sodden-visaged, blear-eyed six feet of brutishness, holding up his hose with one hand, for want of points, and clawing with the other his elf-locks, on which a fair sprinkling of feathers might denote that he was just out of bed, having been out sheep-stealing all the night before.

Presently he spies Amyas and his party coming slowly over the hill, pricks up his ears, and counts them ; sees Amyas's armour ; shakes his head and grunts ; and then, being a man of few words, utters a sleepy howl—

“ Mirooi !—Fushing pooale ! ”

A strapping lass—whose only covering is a green bodice and red petticoat, neither of them over ample—brings out his fishing-rod and basket, and the man, having tied up his hose with some ends of string, examines the footlink.

“ Don vlies' gone ! ”

“ May be,” says Mary ; “ shouldn't hav' left mun out to coort. May be old hen's ate mun off. I see her chocking about a while ago.”

The host receives this intelligence with an oath, and replies by a violent blow at Mary's head.

Mary runs in, combs her hair, slips a pair of stockings and her best gown over her dirt, and awaits the coming guests, who make a few long faces at the “ mucky sort of a place,” but prefer to spend the night there than to bivouac close to the enemy's camp.

So the old hen which has swallowed the dun fly is killed, plucked, and roasted, and certain “ black Dartmoor mutton ” is put on the gridiron, and being compelled to confess the truth by that fiery torment, proclaims itself to all noses as red-deer venison. In the meanwhile Amyas has put his horse and ponies into a shed, to which he can find neither lock nor key, and therefore return grumbling, not without fear for his steeds' safety. The baggage is heaped in a corner of the room, and Amyas stretches his legs before a turf fire ; while Yeo, who has his notions about the place, posts himself at the door, and the men are seized with a desire to superintend the cooking, probably to be attributed to the fact that Mary is cook.

Presently Yeo comes in again.

"There's a gentleman just coming up, Sir, &ll alone."

"Ask him to make one of our party, then, with my compliments."

Yeo goes out, and returns in five minutes.

"Please, Sir, he's gone in back ways, by the court."

"Well, he has an odd taste, if he makes himself at home here."

Out goes Yeo again, and comes back once more after five minutes, in high excitement.

"Come out, Sir ; for goodness' sake come out. I've got him. Safe as a rat in a trap, I have !"

"Who ?"

"A Jesuit, Sir."

"Nonsense, man !"

"I tell you truth, Sir."

So Amyas ran out, and began a string of apologies to—his cousin Eustace.

Yes, here he was, with such a countenance, half foolish, half venomous, as Reynard wears when the last spadeful of earth is thrown back, and he is revealed sitting disconsolately on his tail within a yard of the terriers' noses.

Neither cousin spoke for a minute or two. At last Amyas,—

"Well, cousin hide-and-seek, how long have you added horse-stealing to your other trades ?"

"My dear Amyas," said Eustace very meekly, "I may surely go into an inn stable without intending to steal what is in it."

"Of course, old fellow," said Amyas, mollified, "I was only in jest. But what brings you here ? Not prudence, certainly."

"I am bound to know no prudence save for the Lord's work."

"That's giving away Agnus Deis, and deceiving poor heathen wenches, I suppose," said Yeo.

Eustace answered pretty roundly—

"Heathens ? Yes, truly ; you Protestants leave these poor wretches heathens, and then insult and persecute those who, with a devotion unknown to you, labour at the danger of their lives to make them Christians. Mr. Amyas Leigh, you can give me up to be hanged at Exeter, if it shall so please you to disgrace your own family ; but from this spot neither you, no, nor all the myrmidons of your Queen, shall drive me, while there is a soul here left unsaved."

"Come out of the stable, at least," said Amyas ; "you don't want to make the horses Papists, as well as the asses, do you ? Come out, man, and go to the devil your own way. I shan't

inform against you ; and Yeo here will hold his tongue if I tell him, I know."

"It goes sorely against my conscience, Sir ; but being that he is your cousin, of course—"

"Of course ; and now come in and eat with me ; supper's just ready, and by-gones shall be by-gones, if you will have them so."

How much forgiveness Eustace felt in his heart, I know not ; but he knew, of course, that he ought to forgive ; and to go in and eat with Amyas was to perform an act of forgiveness. So in he went ; and yet he never forgot that scar upon his cheek ; and Amyas could not look him in the face, but Eustace must fancy that his eyes were on the scar. They talked away over the venison, guardedly enough at first ; but as they went on, Amyas's straightforward kindness warmed poor Eustace's frozen heart ; and ere they were aware, they found themselves talking over old haunts and old passages of their boyhood—uncles, aunts, and cousins ; and Eustace, without any sinister intention, asked Amyas why he was going to Bideford, while Frank and his mother were in London.

"To tell you the truth, I cannot rest till I have heard the whole story about poor Rose Salterne."

"What about her ?" cried Eustace.

"Do you not know ?"

"How should I know anything here ? For Heaven's sake, what has happened ?"

Amyas told him, wondering at his eagerness, for he had never had the least suspicion of Eustace's love.

Eustace shrieked aloud.

"Fool, fool that I have been ! Caught in my own trap ! Villain, villain that he is ! After all he promised me at Lundy !"

And springing up, Eustace stamped up and down the room gnashing his teeth, tossing his head from side to side, and clutching with outstretched hands at the empty air.

Amyas sat thunderstruck. His first impulse was to ask, "Lundy ? What knew you of him ? What had he or you to do at Lundy ?" but pity conquered curiosity.

"Oh, Eustace ! And you then loved her too ?"

"Don't speak to me ! Loved her ? Yes, Sir, and had as good a right to love her as any one of your precious brotherhood of the Rose. Don't speak to me, I say, or I shall do you a mischief !"

So Eustace knew of the brotherhood too ! Amyas longed to ask him how ; but what use in that ? If he knew it, he knew it ; and what harm ? So he only answered,—

"My good cousin, why be wroth with me ? If you really love

her, now is the time to take counsel with me how best we shall-- "

Eustace did not let him finish his sentence. Conscious that he had betrayed himself upon more points than one, he stopped short in his walk, suddenly collected himself by one great effort, and eyed Amyas from underneath his brows with the old down look.

"How best we shall do what, my valiant cousin ?" said he, in a meaning and half scornful voice. "What does your most chivalrous brotherhood of the Rose purpose in such a case ?"

Amyas, a little nettled, stood on his guard in return, and answered bluntly,—

"What the brotherhood of the Rose will do, I can't say. What it ought to do, I have a pretty sure guess."

"So have I. To hunt her down as you would an outlaw, because forsooth she has dared to love a Catholic ; to murder her lover in her arms, and drag her home again stained with his blood, to be forced, by threats and persecution, to renounce that church into whose maternal bosom she has doubtless long since found rest and holiness !"

"If she has found holiness, it matters little to me where she has found it, Master Eustace : but that is the very point that I should be glad to know for certain."

"And you will go and discover for yourself ?"

"Have you no wish to discover it also ?"

"And if I had, what would that be to you ?"

"Only," said Amyas, trying hard to keep his temper, "that, if we had the same purpose, we might sail in the same ship."

"You intend to sail, then ?"

"I mean simply, that we might work together."

"Our paths lie on very different roads, Sir !"

"I am afraid you never spoke a truer word, Sir. In the meanwhile, ere we part, be so kind as to tell me what you meant by saying that you had met this Spaniard at Lundy ?"

"I shall refuse to answer that."

"You will please to recollect, Eustace, that however good friends we have been for the last half-hour, you are in my power. I have a right to know the bottom of this matter ; and, by Heaven, I will know it !"

"In your power ? see that you are not in mine ! Remember, Sir, that you are within a—within a few miles, at least, of those who will obey me, their Catholic benefactor : but who owe no allegiance to those Protestant authorities who have left them to the lot of the beasts which perish."

Amyas was very angry. However, all he did was to go to the door, open it, and bowing to his cousin, bid him walk out and go

to the devil, since he seemed to have set his mind on ending his days in the company of that personage.

Whereon Eustace vanished.

And so had Yeo.

No one knew where ; he had gone out to say his prayers, and had not returned.

"Never mind," said Amyas, who suspected some plot on the old man's part. "He'll take care of himself, I'll warrant him."

"No fear of that, Sir"; and the four tars were soon snoring in concert round the fire, while Amyas laid himself on the settle, with his saddle for a pillow.

* * * * *

It was about midnight, when Amyas leaped to his feet almost without waking. From the shouts and clatter, it was evident that a sharp fight was going on in the court yard, and that Yeo was hallooing lustily for help.

Out turned the men, sword in hand, burst the back door open, stumbling over pails and pitchers, and into the court-yard, where Yeo, his back against the stable-door, was holding his own manfully with sword and buckler against a dozen men.

Dire and manifold was the screaming ; geese screamed, chickens screamed, pigs screamed, donkeys screamed, Mary screamed from an upper window.

The screaming went on, but the fight ceased ; for, as Amyas rushed into the yard, the whole party of ruffians took to their heels, and vanished over a low hedge at the other end of the yard. But Eustace and Parsons were cornered.

"Are you hurt, Yeo ?"

"Not a scratch, thank Heaven ! But I've got two of them, the ringleaders, I have. One of them's against the wall. Your horse did for t'other."

Yeo, it appears, came to the conclusion that Eustace intended to steal the horses ; so instead of going to bed, he hid in the stables. Soon, the rabble invaded the stables and, to their cost, found Yeo there. Two of the thieves were killed in the confusion, the King of the Gubbings being one of them.

When it was all over, Yeo said : "Mark my words, Sir, if we have not a hundred stout rogues upon us before two hours are out ; forgive us they never will ; and if we get off with our lives, which I don't much expect, we shall leave our horses behind ; for we can hold the house, Sir, well enough till morning : but court-yard, we can't, that's certain !"

We had better march at once, then."

Think, Sir ; if they catch us up—as they are sure to do,

knowing the country, better than we—how will our shot stand their arrows ? ”

“ Eustace, you will be so kind as to go back to your lambs ; and tell them, that if they meddle with us cruel wolves again to-night, we are ready and willing to fight to the death, and have plenty of shot and powder at their service. Father Parsons, you will be so kind as to accompany us ; it is but fitting that the shepherd should be hostage for his sheep.”

“ If you carry me off this spot, Sir, you carry my corpse only,” said Parsons. “ I may as well die here as be hanged elsewhere, like my martyred brother Campian.”

“ If you take him, you must take me too,” said Eustace.

“ What if we won’t ? ”

“ How will you gain by that ? you can only leave me here. You cannot make me go to the Gubbings, if I do not choose.”

Amyas uttered, sotto voce, an anathema on Jesuits, Gubbings, and things in general. He was in a great hurry to get to Bideford, and he feared that this business would delay him, as it was, a day or two. He wanted to hang Parsons : he did not want to hang Eustace ; and Eustace, he knew, was well aware of that latter fact, and played his game accordingly : but time ran on, and he had to answer sulkily enough—

“ Well, then ; if you, Eustace, will go and give my message to your converts, I will promise to set Mr. Parsons free again before we come to Lydford town ; and I advise you, if you have any regard for his life, to see that your eloquence be persuasive enough ; for as sure as I am an Englishman, and he none, if the Gubbings attack us, the first bullet that I shall fire at them will have gone through his scoundrelly brains.”

Parsons still kicked.

“ Very well, then, my merry men all. Tie this gentleman’s hands behind his back, get the horses out, and we’ll right away up into Dartmoor, find a good high tor, stand our ground there till morning, and then carry him into Okehampton to the nearest justice. If he chooses to delay me in my journey, it is fair that I should make him pay for it.”

Whereon Parsons gave in and went quietly as far as Lydford.

When Amyas arrived at Bideford, his disappointment was great. It was a deserted place. For when he rode up to Sir Richard’s door, he found that the good Knight was still in Ireland, and Lady Grenville at Stow. Whereupon he rode back again down the High-street to that same bow-windowed Ship Tavern where the brotherhood of the Rose made their vow, and settled himself in the very room where they had supped.

"Ah! Mr. Leigh—Captain Leigh now, I beg pardon," quoth mine host. "Bideford is an empty place now-a-days, and nothing stirring, Sir. What with Sir Richard to Ireland, and Sir John to London, and all the young gentlemen to the wars, there's no one to buy good liquor, and no one to court the young ladies, neither. Ale, Sir, and aqua vitæ, and such low-bred trade, is all I draw now-a-days. Try a pint of sherry, Sir, now, to give you an appetite. You mind my sherry of old? Jane! Sherry and sugar, quick, while I pull off the Captain's boots."

Amyas sat weary and sad, while the innkeeper chattered on.

"Ah, Sir! two or three like you would set the young ladies all alive again... By-the-bye, there's been strange doings among them since you were here last. You mind Mistress Salterne?"

"For God's sake, don't let us have that story, man! I heard enough of it at Plymouth!" said Amyas, in so disturbed a tone that mine host looked up, and said to himself—

"Ah, poor young gentleman, he's one of the hard-hit ones."

"How is the old man?" asked Amyas, after a pause.

"Bears it well enough, Sir; but a changed man. Never speaks to a soul, if he can help it. Some folk say he's not right in his head; or turned miser, or somewhat, and takes nought but bread and water, and sits up all night in the room as was hers, turning over her garments. Heaven knows what's on his mind—they do say he was over hard on her, and that drove her to it. All I know is, he has never been in here for a drop of liquor (and he came as regular every evening as the town clock, Sir) since she went, except a ten days ago, and then he met young Mr. Cary at the door, and I heard him ask Mr. Cary when you would be home, Sir."

"Put on my boots again. I'll go and see him."

"Bless you, Sir! What, without your sack?"

"Drink it yourself, man."

"But you wouldn't go out again this time o' night on an empty stomach, now?"

"Fill my men's stomachs for them, and never mind mine. It's market-day, is it not?" and Amyas strode out, and along the quay to Bridgeland Street, and knocked at Mr. Salterne's door.

Salterne himself opened it, with his usual stern courtesy.

"I saw you coming up the street, Sir. I have been expecting this honour from you for some time past. Welcome, Sir, into a lonely house. I trust the good Knight your general is well."

"The good knight my general is with God who made him, Mr. Salterne."

"Dead, Sir?"

"Foundered at sea on our way home; and the *Delfight* lost too."

"Humph !" growled Salterne, after a minute's silence. "I had a venture in her. I suppose it's gone. No matter—I can afford it, Sir, and more, I trust."

He led Amyas into his parlour, and called to the apprentices to run one way, and to the cook to run another.

"Ybu must not trouble yourself to get me supper, indeed."

"I must though, Sir, and the best of wine too ; and old Salterne had a good tap of Alicant in old time, old time, old time, Sir ! and you must drink it now, whether he does or not !" and out he bustled.

Amyas sat still, wondering what was coming next, and puzzled at the sudden hilarity of the man, as well as his hospitality, so different from what the innkeeper had led him to expect.

In a minute more one of the apprentices came in to lay the cloth, and Amyas questioned him about his master.

"Thank the Lord that you are come, Sir," said the lad.

"Why, then ?"

"Because there'll be a chance of us poor fellows getting a little broken meat. We'm half-starved, this three months—bread and dripping, bread and dripping, oh dear, Sir ! And now he's sent out to the inn for chickens, and game, and salads, and all that money can buy, and down in the cellar haling out the best of wine."—And the lad smacked his lips audibly at the thought.

"Is he out of his mind ?"

"I can't tell ; he saith as how he must save mun's money now-a-days ; for he've a got a great venture on hand : but what a be he tell'th no man. They call'th mun 'bread and dripping' now, Sir, all town over," said the prentice, confidentially, to Amyas.

"They do, do they, Sirrah ! Then they will call me bread and no dripping to-morrow !" and old Salterne, entering from behind, made a dash at the poor fellow's ears : but luckily thought better of it, having a couple of bottles in each hand.

"My dear Sir," said Amyas, "you don't mean us to drink all that wine ?"

"Why not, Sir ?" answered Salterne, in a grim, half sneering tone, thrusting out his square-grizzled beard and chin. "Why not, Sir ? why should I not make merry when I have the honour of a noble captain in my house ? one who has sailed the seas, Sir, and cut Spaniards' throats ; and may cut them again too ; eh, Sir ? Boy, where's the kettle and the sugar ?"

"What on earth is the man at ?" quoth Amyas to himself—
"flattering me or laughing at me ?"

"Yes," he ran on, half to himself, in a deliberate tone, evidently

intending to hint more than he said, as he began brewing the sack—in plain English, hot negus ; “ Yes, bread and dripping for those who can’t fight Spaniards ; but the best that money can buy for those who can: I heard of you at Smerwick, Sir.—Yes, bread and dripping for me too—I can’t fight Spaniards.”

And so he ran on all supper-time, hardly allowing Amyas to get a word in edge-ways : but heaping him with coarse flattery, and urging him to drink, till after the cloth was drawn, and the two left alone, he grew so outrageous that Amyas was forced to take him to task good-humouredly.

“ Now, my dear Sir, you have feasted me royally, and better far than I deserve : but why will you go about to make me drunk twice over, first with vain-glory, and then with wine ? ”

Salterne looked at him awhile fixedly, and then, sticking out his chin—“ Because, Captain Leigh, I am a man who has all his life tried the crooked road first, and found the straight one the safer after all.”

“ Eh, Sir ? That is a strange speech for one who bears the character of the most upright man in Bideford.”

“ Humph. So I thought myself once, Sir ; and well I have proved it. But I’ll be plain with you, Sir. You’ve heard how—how I’ve fared since you saw me last ? ”

Amyas nodded his head.

“ I thought so. Shame rides post. Now then, Captain Leigh, listen to me. I, being a plain man and a burgher, and one that never drew iron in my life except to mend a pen, ask you, being a gentleman and a captain and a man of honour, what would you do in my place ? ”

“ Humph ! ” said Amyas, “ that would very much depend on whether ‘ my place ’ was my own fault or not.”

“ And what if it were, Sir ? What if all that the charitable folk of Bideford have been telling you in the last hour be true, Sir, true ! and yet not half the truth ? ”

Amyas gave a start.

“ Ah, you shrink from me, and you shall know a little—as much as I can tell—or you understand. Come upstairs with me, Sir, as you’ll drink no more ; I have a liking for you. I have watched you from your boyhood, and I can trust you, and I’ll show you what I never showed to mortal man but one.”

And, taking up a candle, he led the way upstairs, while Amyas followed wondering.

He stopped at a door, and unlocked it.

“ There, come in. Those shutters have not been opened since she—” and the old man was silent.

Amyas looked round the room. It was a low wainscoted room, such as one sees in old houses : everything was in the most perfect neatness. The snow-white sheets on the bed were turned down as if ready for an occupant. There were books arranged on the shelves, fresh flowers on the table ; the dressing-table had all its woman's mundus of pins, and rings, and brushes ; even the dressing gown lay over the chair-back. Everything was evidently just as it had been left.

"This was her room, Sir," whispered the old man.

Amyas nodded silently, and half drew back.

"You need not be modest about entering it now, Sir," whispered he, with a sort of sneer. "There has been no frail flesh and blood in it for many a day."

Amyas sighed.

"And now," he whispered, "one thing more. Look here !"—and pulling out a key, he unlocked a chest, and lifted up tray after tray of necklaces and jewels, furs, lawns, cloth of gold. "Look there ! Two thousand pound won't buy that chest. Twenty years have I been getting those things together. That's the cream of many a Levant voyage, and East Indian voyage, and West Indian voyage. My Lady Bath can't match those pearls in her grand house at Tawstock ; I got 'em from a Genoese, though, and paid for 'em. Look at that embroidered lawn ! There's not such a piece in London ; no, nor in Alexandria, I'll warrant ; nor short of Calicut, where it came from."

"And whom do you think I kept all these for? These were for her wedding-day—for her wedding-day. For your wedding-day, if you'd been minded, Sir ! Yes, yours, Sir ! And yet, I believe, I was so ambitious that I would not have let her marry under an earl, all the while I was pretending to be too proud to throw her at the head of a squire's son. Ah well ! There was my idol, Sir. I made her mad, I pampered her up with gewgaws and vanity ; and then, because my idol was just what I had made her, I turned again and rent her.

"And now," said he, pointing to the open chest, "that was what I meant ; and that" (pointing to the empty bed), "was what God meant. Go, and be merry while you can, young Sir ! . . . And yet, all this might have been yours. And—but I don't suppose you are one to be won by money—but all this may be yours still, and twenty thousand pounds to boot."

"I want no money, Sir, but what I can earn with my own sword."

"Earn my money, then !"

"What on earth do you want of me ?"

"To keep your oath," said Salterne, clutching his arm, and looking up into his face with searching eyes.

"My oath ! How did you know that I had one ?"

"Ah ! you were well ashamed of it, I suppose, next day ! A drunken frolic all about a poor merchant's daughter ! But there is nothing hidden that shall not be revealed, nor done in the closet, that is not proclaimed on the house-tops."

"Ashamed of it, Sir, I never was : but I have a right to ask how you came to know it ?"

"What if a poor fat squinty rogue, a low-born fellow even as I am, whom you had baffled and made a laughing-stock, had come to me in my loneliness and sworn before God that if you honourable gentlemen would not keep your words, he the clown would ?"

"John Brimblecombe ?"

"And what if I had brought him where I have brought you, and shown him what I have shown you, and, instead of standing as stiff as any Spaniard, as you do, he had thrown himself on his knees by that bedside, and wept and prayed, Sir, till he opened my hard heart for the first and last time, and I fell down on my sinful knees and wept and prayed by him ?"

"I am not given to weeping, Mr. Salterne," said Amyas ; "and as for praying, I don't know yet what I have to pray for. on her account : my business is to work. Show me what I can do ; and when you have done that, it will be full time to upbraid me with not doing it."

"You can cut that fellow's throat."

"It would take a long arm to reach him."

"I suppose it is as easy to sail to the Spanish main as it was to sail round the world."

"My good Sir," said Amyas, "I have at this moment no more worldly goods than my clothes and my sword ; so how to sail to the Spanish main, I don't quite see."

"And do you suppose, Sir, that I should hint to you of such a voyage, if I meant you to be at the charge of it ? No, Sir, if you want two thousand pounds, or five, to fit a ship, take it ! Take it, Sir ! I hoarded money for my child : and now I will spend it to avenge her."

Amyas was silent for awhile ; the old man still held his arm, still looked up steadfastly and fiercely in his face.

"Bring me home that man's head, and take ship, prizes—all ! Keep the gain, Sir, and give me the revenge !"

"Gain ? Do you think I need bribing, Sir ? What kept me silent was the thought of my mother : I dare not go without her leave."

Salterne made a gesture of impatience.

CHAPTER XIV

HOW MR. JOHN BRIMBLECOMBE UNDERSTOOD THE NATURE OF AN OATH

ABOUT six weeks after the duel, the miller at Stow had come up to the great house in much tribulation, to borrow the bloodhounds. Rose Salterne had vanished in the night, no man knew whither.

Sir Richard was in Bideford : but the old steward took on himself to send for the keepers, and down went the serving-men to the Mill with all the idle lads of the parish at their heels, thinking a maiden-hunt very good sport : and of course taking a view of the case as favourable as possible to Rose.

They reviled the miller and his wife roundly for hard-hearted old heathens ; and had no doubt that they had driven the poor maid to throw herself over cliff, or drown herself in the sea ; while all the women of Stow, on the other hand, were of unanimous opinion that the hussy had " gone off " with some bad fellow ; and that pride was sure to have a fall, and so forth.

The facts of the case were, that all Rose's trinkets were left behind, so that she had at least gone off honestly ; and nothing seemed to be missing, but some of her linen, which old Anthony the steward broadly hinted was likely to be found in other people's boxes. The only trace was a little footmark under her bedroom window. On that the bloodhound was laid (of course in leash), and after a premonitory whimper, lifted up his mighty voice, and started bell-mouthed through the garden gate, and up the lane, towing behind him the panting keeper, till they reached the downs above, and went straight away for Marsland-mouth, where the whole posse pulled up breathless at the door of Lucy Passmore.

Lucy, as perhaps I should have said before, was now a widow, and found her widowhood not altogether contrary to her interest. Her augury about her old man had been fulfilled ; he had never returned since the night on which he put to sea with Eustace and the Jesuits.

But the bloodhound, after working about the door awhile, turned down the glen, and never stopped till he reached the sea.

" They'm taken water. Let's go back, and rout out the old witch's house."

But Lucy had gone away ; and her cottage, from which the neighbours shrank as from a haunted place, remained as she had left it, and crept slowly down to four fern-covered walls, past which the little stream went murmuring on from pool to pool—

the only voice, for many a year to come, which broke the silence of that lonely glen.

A few days afterwards, Sir Richard, on his way from Bideford to Stow, looked in at Clovelly Court, and mentioned with a "by the bye" news which made Will Cary leap from his seat almost to the ceiling. What it was we know already.

"And there is no clue?" asked Old Cary; for his son was speechless.

"Only this; I hear that some fellow prowling about the cliffs that night, saw a pinnacle running for Lundy."

Will rose, and went hastily out of the room.

In half-an-hour, he and three or four armed servants were on board a trawling-skiff, and away to Lundy. He did not return for three days, and then brought news; that an elderly man, seemingly a foreigner, had been lodging for some months past in a part of the ruined Moresco Castle; that a few weeks since a younger man, a foreigner also, had joined him from on board a ship. The ship came and went more than once; and the young man in her. A few days since a lady and her maid, a stout woman, came with him up to the castle, and talked with the elder man a long while in secret; abode there all night; and then all three sailed in the morning. The fishermen on the beach had heard the young man call the other father.

Whereon, Old Cary and Sir Richard sent Will on a second trip with the parish constable, who returned with the hapless John Braund, farmer, fisherman, smuggler, &c.; which worthy, after much fruitless examination (wherein examinee was afflicted with extreme deafness and loss of memory), departed to Exeter gaol, on a charge of "harbouring priests, Jesuits, gipsies, and other suspect and traitorous persons."

Poor John Braund, whose motive for entertaining the said customers had probably been not treason, but a wife, seven children, and arrears of rent, did not thrive under the change from the pure air of Lundy to the pestiferous one of Exeter gaol and died miserably in a few days. His secret, if he had one, perished with him.

There the matter dropped for a few days, till one came forward who had no mind to let it drop, and that was Jack Brimblecombe, now curate of Hartland town, and "passing rich on forty pounds a-year."

"I hope no offence, Mr. William; but when are you and the rest going after--after her? The name stuck in his throat.

Cary was taken aback.

"What? Don't laugh at me, Sir, for it's no laughing matter.

I drank that night nought worse, I expect, than red wine. Whatever it was, we swore our oaths, Mr. Cary ; and oaths are oaths, say I."

"Of course, Jack, of course ; but to go to look for her—and when we've found her, cut her lover's throat—Absurd, Jack, even if she were worth looking for, or his throat worth cutting. Tut, tut, tut—"

And so Jack went home to his parish that very evening, weary as he was, in spite of all entreaties to pass the night at Clovelly. But he had left behind him thoughts in Cary's mind, which gave their owner no rest by day or night, till the touch of a seeming accident made them all start suddenly into shape.

He was lounging (so he told Amyas) one murky day on Bideford quay, when up came Mr. Salterne. Cary had shunned him of late, partly from delicacy, partly from dislike of his supposed hard-heartedness. But this time they happened to meet full ; and Cary could not pass without speaking to him.

"Well, Mr. Salterne, and how goes on the shipping trade ?"

"Well enough, Sir, if some of you young gentlemen would but follow Mr. Leigh's example, and go forth to find us stay-at-homes new markets for our ware."

"What ? you want to be rid of us, eh ?"

"I don't know why I should, Sir. We shan't cross each other now, Sir, whatever might have been once. But if I were you, I should be in the Indies about now, if I were not fighting the Queen's battles nearer home."

"In the Indies ? I should make but a poor hand of Drake's trade." And so the conversation dropped ; but Cary did not forget the hint.

"So, lad, to make an end of a long story," said he to Amyas : "if you are minded to take the old man's offer, so am I : and Westward-ho with you, come foul come fair."

"It will be but a wild-goose chase, Will."

"If she is with him, we shall find her at La Guayra. If she is not, and the villain has cast her off down the wind, that will be only an additional reason for making an example of him."

"And if neither of them are there, Will, the Plate-fleets will be ; so it will be our own shame if we come home empty-handed."

"Only mind, if we go, we must needs take Jack Brimblecombe with us, or he will surely heave himself over Harty-point, and his ghost will haunt us to our dying day."

"Jack shall go. None deserves it better."

After which there was a long consultation on practical matters, and it was concluded that Amyas should go up to London and

sound Frank and his mother, before any further steps were taken. The other brethren of the Rose were scattered far and wide, each at his post, and St. Leger had returned to his uncle, so that it would be unfair to them, as well as a considerable delay, to demand of them any fulfilment of their vow. And, as Amyas sagely remarked, "Too many cooks spoil the broth, and half-a-dozen gentlemen aboard one ship are as bad as two kings of Brentford."

With which maxim he departed next morning for London, leaving Yeo with Cary.

CHAPTER XV

THE MOST CHIVALROUS ADVENTURE OF THE GOOD SHIP ROSE

AMYAS arrived in London and sought Frank's apartment. They had not seen each other for three years and talked of many subjects. After much hesitation, Frank broached the subject of Rose Salterne's mysterious disappearance. There was a pause in his conversation and he said: "But I must tell you now, I suppose, once and for all. That has happened at Bideford which—"

"Spare us both, Frank; I know all. I came through Bideford on my way hither; and came hither not merely to see you and my mother, but to ask your advice and her permission."

"True heart! noble heart!" cried Frank. "I knew you would be staunch!"

"Westward-ho it is, then?"

"Can we escape?"

"We?"

"Amyas, does not that which binds you bind me?"

Amyas started back. "You? Dearest man, a month of it would kill you!"

Frank smiled, and tossed his head on one side in his pretty way.

"But Frank—my mother?"

"My mother knows all; and would not have us unworthy of her."

"Impossible! She will never give you up!"

"All things are possible to them that believe in God, my brother; and she believes."

"Fools, fools that we were—that I was, I mean—to take that fantastical vow!"

"Not so," answered a gentle voice from behind: "you

vowed for the sake of peace of earth, and good-will toward men, and 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.' No, my sons, be sure that such self-sacrifice as you have shown will meet its full reward at the hand of Him who sacrificed Himself for you."

"O mother ! mother !" said Amyas, "and do you not hate the very sight of me—come here to take away your first-born ?"

"My boy, God takes him, and not you."

"Ah !" said Amyas. "My blessing, I suppose will be like Esau's, to live by my sword ; while Jacob here, the spiritual man, inherits the kingdom of heaven, and an angel's crown."

"Be it what it may, it will surely be a blessing, as long as you are such, my children, as you have been. Come, now," said she, laying her head upon Amyas's breast, and looking up into his face with one of her most winning smiles, "I have heard of heroic mothers ere now, who went forth with their sons to battle, and cheered them on to victory. Why should I not go with you on a more peaceful errand ? I could nurse the sick, if there were any ; I could perhaps have speech of that poor girl, and win her back more easily than you. She might listen to words from a woman—a woman, too, who has loved—which she could not hear from men. At least I could mend and wash for you. I suppose it is as easy to play the good housewife afloat as on shore ? Come, now !"

Amyas looked from one to the other.

"God only knows which of the two is less fit to go. Mother ! mother ! you know not what you ask. Frank, Frank ! I do not want you with me. This is a sterner matter than either of you fancy it to be ; one that must be worked out, not with kind words, but with sharp shot and cold steel."

"How ?" cried both together, aghast.

"I must pay my men, and pay my fellow-adventurers ; and I must pay them with Spanish gold. And what is more, I cannot, as a loyal subject of the Queen's, go to the Spanish Main with a clear conscience on my own private quarrel, unless I do all the harm that my hand finds to do, by day and night, to her enemies, and the enemies of God."

"What nobler knight-errantry ?" said Frank, cheerfully ; but Mrs. Leigh shuddered.

"What ! Frank too ?" she said, half to herself ; but her sons knew what she meant.

And so the conversation dropped, sadly enough.

So mother and sons returned to Bideford, and set to work. Frank mortgaged a farm ; Will Cary did the same (having some land of his own from his mother). Old Salterne grumbled at any man save himself spending a penny on the voyage, and forced on the adventurers a good ship of two hundred tons burden, and five hundred pounds toward fitting her out ; Mrs. Leigh worked day and night at clothes and comforts of every kind ; Amyas had nothing to give but his time and his brains ; but, as Salterne said the rest would have been of little use without them ; and day after day he and the old merchant were on board the ship, superintending with their own eyes the fitting of every rope and nail. Cary went about beating up recruits ; and made, with his jests and his frankness, the best of crimps : while John Brimblecombe beside himself with joy, toddled about after him from tavern to tavern, and quay to quay, exalted for the time being (as Cary told him) into a second Peter the Hermit ; and so fiercely did he preach a crusade against the Spaniards, through Bideford and Appledore, Clovelly and Ilfracombe, that Amyas might have had a hundred and fifty loose fellows in the first fortnight. But he knew better : still smarting from the effects of a similar taste in the Newfoundland adventure, he had determined to take none but picked men ; and by dint of labour he obtained them.

Frank grew more and more proud of his brother, and more and more humble about himself. For he watched with astonishment how the simple sailor, without genius, scholarship, or fancy, had gained, by plain honesty, patience, and common sense, a power over the human heart, and a power over his work, whatsoever it might be, which Frank could only admire afar off. The men looked up to him as infallible, prided themselves on forestalling his wishes, carried out his slightest hint, worked early and late to win a smile from him ; while as for him, no detail escaped him, no drudgery sickened him, no disappointment angered him, till on the 15th of November, 1583, dropped down from Bideford Quay to Appledore Pool the tall ship *Rose*, with a hundred men on board (for sailors packed close in those days), beef, pork, biscuit, and good ale (for ale went to sea always then) in abundance, four culverins on her main deck, her poop and forecastle well fitted with swivels of every size, and her racks so full of muskets, calivers, long bows, pikes and swords, that all agreed so well-appointed a ship had never sailed "out over Bar."

The next day being Sunday, the whole crew received the Communion together at Northam Church, amid a mighty crowd ; and then going on board again, hove anchor and sailed out over the Bar before a soft east wind, to the music of sackbut, fife, and

drum, with discharge of all ordnance, great and small, with cheering of young and old from cliff and strand and quay, and with many a tearful prayer and blessing upon that gallant bark, and all brave hearts on board.

And Mrs. Leigh, who had kissed her sons for the last time after the Communion at the altar-steps, (and what more fit place for a mother's kiss ?) went to the rocky knoll outside the churchyard wall, and watched the ship glide out between the yellow denes, and lessen slowly hour by hour into the boundless west, till her hull sank below the dim horizon, and her white sails faded away into the grey Atlantic mist, perhaps for ever.

And Mrs. Leigh gathered her cloak about her, and bowed her head and worshipped ; and then went home to loneliness and prayer.

CHAPTER XVI

WHAT BEFEL AT LA GUAYRA

THEY first set foot on the island of Barbados, where they found nobody ; but there was plenty of fresh fruit and they enjoyed a three-days' stay. Then, they pushed on past Grenada and reached the island of Margarita. Here they had an encounter with the Spaniards, in which Jack Brimblecombe distinguished himself.

The men would gladly have hawked awhile round Margarita and Cubagua for another pearl prize. But Amyas, having as he phrased it, "fleshed his dogs," was loth to hang about the islands after the alarm had been given. They ran, therefore, south-west across the mouth of that great bay, which stretches from the Peninsula of Paria to Cape Codera, leaving on their right hand Tortuga, and on their left the meadow-islands of the Piritoos, two long green lines but a few inches above the tideless sea. Yeo and Drew knew every foot of the way, and had good reason to know it ; for they, the first of all English mariners, had tried to trade along this coast with Hawkins. And now, right a-head, sheer out of the sea from base to peak, arose higher and higher the mighty range of the Caraccas mountains ; beside which all hills which most of the crew had ever seen seemed petty mounds. Frank, of course, knew the Alps ; and Amyas the Andes ; but Cary's notions of height were bounded by M'Gillicuddy's Reeks, and Brimblecombe's by Exmoor ; and the latter, to Cary's infinite amusement, spent a whole day holding on by the rigging, and staring upwards with his chin higher than his nose, till he got a stiff neck. Soon the sea became rough and chopping, though the

breeze was fair and gentle ; and ere they were abreast of the Cape, they became aware of that strong eastward current, which, during the winter months, so often baffles the mariner who wishes to go to the westward. All night long they struggled through the billows, with the huge wall of Cape Codera a thousand feet above their heads to the left, and beyond it again, bank upon bank of mountain, bathed in the yellow moonlight.

Morning showed them a large ship, which had passed them during the night upon the opposite course, and was now a good ten miles to the eastward. Yeo was for going back and taking her ; but Amyas and Frank were both unwilling.

" Ah, Sirs, Sirs, she is delivered into your hands, and you will have to give an account of her."

" My good Yeo," said Frank, " I trust we shall give good account enough of many a tall Spaniard before we return : but you know surely that La Guayra and the salvation of one whom we believe dwells there, was our first object in this adventure."

Yeo shook his head sadly. " Ah, Sirs, a lady brought Captain Oxenham to ruin."

" You do not dare to compare her with this one ?" said Frank and Cary, both in a breath.

" God forbid, gentlemen : but no adventure will prosper, unless there is a single eye to the Lord's work ; and that is, as I take it, to cripple the Spaniard, and exalt her Majesty the Queen. And I had thought, that nothing was more dear than that to Captain Leigh's heart."

However, the counsel of Frank prevailed, and on to La Guayra he went. He half hoped that the Spaniard would see and attack them. However, he went on his way to the eastward ; which if he had not done, my story had had a very different ending.

About mid-day a canoe, the first which they had seen, came staggering toward them under a huge three-cornered sail. As it came near, they could see two Indians on board.

" What noble creatures they are ! and how fearlessly they are coming alongside ! Can they know that we are English, and the avengers of the Indians ?"

" I suspect they just take us for Spaniards, and want to sell their cocoa-nuts. See, the canoe is laden with vegetables."

" Hail them, Yeo !" said Amyas. " You talk the best Spanish, and I want speech of one of them."

Yeo did so ; the canoe, without more ado, ran alongside, and lowered her felucca sail, while a splendid Indian scrambled on board like a cat.

He was full six feet high, and as bold and graceful : of bearing as

Frank or Amyas's self. He looked round for the first moment smilingly, showing his white teeth ; but the next, his countenance changed ; and springing to the side, he shouted to his comrade in Spanish,—

“ Treachery ! No Spaniard ! ” and would have leaped overboard ; but a dozen strong fellows caught him ere he could do so.

It required some trouble to master him, so strong was he, and so slippery his naked limbs ; Amyas, meanwhile, alternately entreated the men not to hurt the Indian, and the Indian to be quiet, and no harm should happen to him ; and so, after five minutes' confusion, the stranger gave in sulkily.

“ Don't bind him ! Let him loose, and make a ring round him. Now, my man, there is a dollar for you.”

The Indian's eyes glistened, and he took the coin.

“ All I want of you is, first, to tell me what ships are in La Guayra, and next, to go thither on board of me, and show me which is the governor's house, and which the custom-house.”

The Indian laid the coin down on the deck, and crossing himself, looked Amyas in the face.

“ No, Señor ! I am a freeman and a cavalier, a Christian Guayqueria, whose forefathers, first of all the Indians, swore fealty to the King of Spain, and whom he calls to this day in all his proclamations his most faithful, loyal, and noble Guayquerias. God forbid, therefore, that I should tell aught to his enemies, who are my enemies likewise.”

A growl arose from those of the men who understood him ; and more than one hinted that a cord twined round the head, or a match put between the fingers, would speedily extract the required information.

“ God forbid ! ” said Amyas, “ a brave and loyal man he is, and as such will I treat him. Tell me, my brave fellow, how do you know us to be his Catholic Majesty's enemies ? ”

The Indian, with a shrewd smile, pointed to half-a-dozen different objects, saying to each, “ Not Spanish.”

“ Well, and what of that ? ”

“ None but Spaniards and free Guayquerias have a right to sail these seas.”

Amyas laughed.

“ Thou art a right valiant bit of copper. Pick up thy dollar, and go thy way in peace. Make room for him, men. We can learn what we want without his help.”

The Indian paused, incredulous and astonished.

“ Overboard with you ! ” quoth Amyas. “ Don't you know when you are well off ? ”

"Most illustrious Señor," began the Indian, in the drawing sententious fashion of his race, "I have been deceived. I heard that you heretics roasted and ate all true Catholics (as we Guayquerias are), and that all your padres had tails."

"Plague on you, Sirrah!" squeaked Jack Brimblecomb. "Have I a tail? Look here!"

"Quien sabe? Who knows?" quoth the Indian through his nose.

"How do you know we are heretics?" said Amyas.

"Humph! But in repayment for your kindness, I would warn you, illustrious Señor, not to go on to La Guayra. There are ships of war there waiting for you; and moreover the governor, Don Guzman, sailed to the eastward only yesterday to look for you; and I wonder much that you did not meet him."

"To look for us! On the watch for us!" said Cary. "Impossible; lies! Amyas, this is some trick of the rascal's to frighten us away."

"Don Guzman came out but yesterday to look for us? Are you sure you spoke truth?"

"As I live, Señor, he and another ship, for which I took yours."

Amyas stamped upon the deck: that then was the ship which they had passed!

"Fool that I was to have been close to my enemy, and let my opportunity slip! If I had but done my duty, all would have gone right!"

But it was too late to repine; and after all, the Indian's story was likely enough to be false.

"Off with you!" said he; and the Indian bounded over the side into his canoe, leaving the whole crew wondering at the stateliness and courtesy of this bold sea-cavalier.

So Westward-ho they ran, beneath the mighty northern wall, the highest cliff on earth, some 7,000 feet of rock parted from the sea by a narrow strip of bright green lowland.

And now the last point is rounded, and they are full in sight of the spot in quest of which they have sailed four thousand miles of sea. A low black cliff, crowned by a wall; a battery at either end. Within, a few narrow streets of white houses. Drew, who had been off the place before, pointed out to them a narrow path, which wound upwards through a glen, seemingly sheer perpendicular. That was the road to the capital, if any man dare try it. In spite of the shadow of the mountain, the whole place wore a dusty and glaring look. The breaths of air which came off the land were utterly stifling.

Where was the harbour? There was none. Only an open

roadstead, wherein lay tossing at anchor five vessels. The two outer ones were small merchant caravels. Behind them lay two long, low, ugly-looking craft, at sight of which Yeo gave a long wheugh.

"Galleys, as I'm a sinful saint ! And what's that big one inside of them, Robert Drew ? She has more than hawseholes in her idolatrous black sides, I think."

"We shall open her astern of the galleys in another minute," said Amyas.

"Six round portholes on the main deck," quoth Will.

"In for it we are, Captain. Let's go in, nevertheless, and pound the Don's ribs, my old lad of Smerwick. Eh ? Three to one is very fair odds."

"Not underneath those fort guns, I beg leave to say," quoth Yeo.

"Quite true," said Amyas.

And as he spoke, a puff of white smoke rolled from the eastern fort, and a heavy ball plunged into the water between it and the ship.

"I don't altogether like this," quoth Amyas. "What do they mean by firing on us without warning ? And what are these ships of war doing here ? Drew, you told me the armadas never lay here."

"No more, I believe, they do, Sir, on account of the anchorage being so bad, as you may see. I'm mortal afeared that rascal's story was true, and that the Dons have got wind of our coming."

"If they do expect us, they must have known some time since, or how could they have got their craft hither ?"

"True, Sir. They must have come from Santa Martha, at the least ; perhaps from Carthagená. And that would take a month at least going and coming."

Amyas suddenly recollected Eustace's threat in the wayside inn. Could he have betrayed their purpose ? Impossible !

"Let us hold a council of war, at all events, Frank."

Frank was absorbed in a very different matter. A half-mile to the eastward of the town, two or three hundred feet up the steep mountain side, stood a large, low, white house, embosomed in trees and gardens. There was no other house of similar size near ; no place for one. And was not that the royal flag of Spain which flaunted before it ? That must be the governor's house ; that must be the abode of the Rose of Torridge ! And Frank stood devouring it with wild eyes, till he had persuaded himself that he could see a woman's figure walking upon the terrace in front, and that the figure was none other than hers whom he sought. Amyas

could hardly tear him away to a council of war, which was a *sau*, and only not a peevish one.

The three adventurers, with Brimblecombe, Yeo, and Drew, went apart upon the poop ; and each looked the other in the face awhile. For what was to be done ? The plans and hopes of months were brought to naught in an hour.

"It is impossible, you see," said Amyas at last, "to surprise the town by land, while these ships are here ; for if we land our men, we leave our ship without defence."

"As impossible as to challenge Don Guzman while he is not here," said Cary.

"I wonder why the ships have not opened on us already," said Drew.

"Why not send in a boat, to treat with them, and to inquire for—"

"For her ?" interrupted Frank. "If we show that we are aware of her existence, her name is blasted in the eyes of those jealous Spaniards."

Said Yeo, "if you will take an old man's advice, trust them not. They will keep the same faith with us as they kept with Captain Hawkins at San Juan d'Ulloa, in that accursed business which was the beginning of all the wars ; when we might have taken the whole Plate-fleet, with two hundred thousand pounds' worth of gold on board, and did not, but only asked licence to trade like honest men. And yet, after they had granted us licence, and deceived us by fair speech into landing ourselves and our ordnance, the governor and all the fleet set upon us, five to one, and gave no quarter to any soul whom he took. No, Sir ; I expect the only reason why they don't attack us is, because their crews are not on board."

"They will be, soon enough, then," said Amyas. "I can see soldiers coming down the landing-stairs."

And, in fact, boats full of armed men began to push off to the ships.

"We may thank Heaven," said Drew, "that we were not here two hours ago. The sun will be down before they are ready for sea, and the fellows will have no stomach to go looking for us by night."

"So much the worse for us. If they will but do that we may give them the slip, and back again to the town, and there try our luck ; for I cannot find it in my heart to leave the place without having one dash at it."

Yeo shook his head. "There are plenty more towns along the coast more worth trying than this, Sir : but Heaven's will be done !"

And as they spoke, the sun plunged into the sea, and all was dark.

At last it was agreed to anchor, and wait till midnight. If the ships of war came out, they were to try to run in past them, and, desperate as the attempt might be, attempt their original plan of landing to the westward of the town, taking it in flank, plundering the government storehouses, which they saw close to the landing-place, and then fighting their way back to their boats, and out of the roadstead. Two hours would suffice if the armada and the galleys were but once out of the way.

Amyas went forward, called the men together, and told them the plan. It was not very cheerfully received : but what else was there to be done ?

They ran down about a mile and a half to the westward, and anchored.

The night wore on, and there was no sign of stir among the shipping ; and the men fretted and fumed for weary hours, at thus seeing a rich prize (for of course the town was paved with gold) within arm's reach, and yet impossible.

But though a venture on the town was impossible, yet there was another venture which Frank was unwilling to let slip. A light which now shone brightly in one of the windows of the governor's house, was the lodestar to which all his thoughts were turned ; and as he sat in the cabin with Amyas, Cary, and Jack, he opened his heart to them.

"And are we, then," asked he, mournfully, "to go without doing the very thing for which we came ?"

All were silent awhile. At last John Brimblecombe spoke.

"Show me the way to do it, Mr. Frank, and I will go."

"My dearest man," said Amyas, "what would you have ? Any attempt to see her, even if she be here, would be all but certain death."

"And what if it were ?"

"Of death ?" said Cary. "I should have said, of life. God forgive me ! but man might wish to live for ever, if he had such a world as this wherein to live."

"One thing I have to do before I die, for God has laid it on me. Let that be done to-night, and then, farewell !" urged Frank.

"Frank ! Frank ! remember our mother !"

"I do remember her. I have talked over these things with her many a time ; and where I would fain be, she would fain be also."

"What would you do, then ?"

"Go up to that house, Amyas, and speak with her, if Heaven gives me an opportunity, as Heaven, I feel assured, will give."

"And do you call that no rashness?"

"Is any duty rashness? Is it rash to stand amid the flying bullets, if your Queen has sent you?"

"If you go, I go with you!" said all three at once.

"No. Amyas, you owe a duty to our mother, and to your ship. Cary, you are heir to great estates; and are bound thereby to your country and to your tenants. John Brimblecombe—"

"Ay!" squeaked Jack. "And what have you to say, Mr. Frank, against my going?—I, who have neither ship nor estates—except, I suppose, that I am not worthy to travel in such good company?"

"Think of your old parents, John, and all your sisters."

"I thought of them before I started, Sir, as Mr. Cary knows, and you know too. I came here to keep my vow, and I am not going to turn renegade at the very foot of the cross."

"Some one must go with you, Frank," said Amyas; "if it were only to bring back the boats' crew in case—" and he faltered.

"In case I fall," replied Frank, with a smile.

"I will tell you what we will do, gentlemen all," said John. "We three will draw cuts for the honour of going with him."

"Lots?" said Amyas. "I don't like leaving such grave matters to chance, friend John."

"Chance, Sir? When you have used all your own wit, and find it fail you, then what is drawing lots but taking the matter out of your own weak hands, and laying it in God's strong hands?"

"Right, John!" said Frank.

They agreed, seeing no better counsel, and John put three slips of paper into Frank's hand, with the simple old apostolic prayer—"Show which of us three Thou has chosen."

The lot fell upon Amyas Leigh.

Frank shuddered, and clasped his hands over his face.

"Well," said Cary, "I have ill-luck to-night: but Frank goes at least in good company."

"Ah, that it had been I!" said Jack. "It is hard for flesh and blood to have come all this way and not to see her after all!"

"Jack," said Frank, "you are kept to do better work than this, doubt not. Amyas, can we have a boat, and a crew? It is near midnight already."

Amyas went on deck, and asked for six volunteers. Whosoever would come, Amyas would double out of his own purse any prize-money which might fall to that man's share.

One of the old Pelican's crew, Simon Evans of Clovelly, stepped out at once.

"Why six only, Captain ? Give the word, and any and all of us will go up with you, sack the house, and bring off the treasure and the lady, before two hours are out."

"No, no, my brave lads ! As for treasure, if there be any, it is sure to have been put all safe into the forts, or hidden in the mountains ; and as for the lady, God forbid that we should force her a step without her own will."

The sailor did not quite understand this punctilio; but—

"Well, Captain," quoth he, "as you like ; but no man shall say that you asked for a volunteer, were it to jump down a shark's throat, but what you had me first of all the crew."

After this sort of temper had been exhibited, three or four more came forward—Yeo was very anxious to go, but Amyas forbade him.

"I'll volunteer, Sir, without reward, for this or any thing ; though I would to Heaven that the thought had never entered your head."

So the crew was made up ; but ere they pushed off, Amyas called Cary aside—

"If I perish, Will—"

"Don't talk of uch things, dear old lad."

"I must. Then you are captain. Do nothing without Yeo and Drew. But if they approve, go right no th away for San Domingo and Cuba, and try the ports ; they can have no news of us there, and there is booty without end. Tell my mother that I died like a gentleman ; and mind—mind, dear lad, to keep your temper with the men, let the poor fellows grumble as they may. Mind but that, and fear God, and all wil go well."

The tears were glistening in Cary's eyes as he pressed Amyas's hand, and watched the two brothers down over the side upon their desperate errand.

They reached the pebble beach. There seemed no difficult about finding the path to the house—so bright was the moon. They found it easily, for it was made of white shell sand ; and following it struck into a "tuna!" or belt of tall thorny cactuses. Through this the path wound in zigzags up a steep rocky slope, and ended at a wicket-gate. They tried it, and found it open.

"She may expect us," whispered Frank.

"Impossible !"

"Why not ? She must have seen our ship ; and if, as seems, the townsfolk know who we are, how much more must she ? Yes, doubt it not, she still longs to hear news of her own land, and some secret sympathy will draw her down towards the sea to-night. See ! the light is in the window, still !"

"But if not," said Amyas, who had no such expectation, "what is your plan?"

"I have none."

"None?"

"I have imagined twenty different ones in the last hour; but all are equally uncertain, impossible."

Amyas was at his wits' end. Judging of his brother by himself, he had taken for granted that Frank had some well-concocted scheme for gaining admittance to the Rose.

"You are going to certain death, Frank," said Amyas.

"Did I not entreat," answered he very quietly, "to go alone?"

Amyas had half a mind to compel him to return: but he feared Frank's obstinacy; and feared, too, the shame of returning on board without having done anything; so they went up through the wicket-gate, along a smooth turf walk, into what seemed a pleasure-garden, formed by the hand of man, or rather of woman.

"What a paradise!" said Amyas to Frank.

It was, as I have said, a long low house, with balconies along the upper story, and the under part mostly open to the wind. The light was still burning in the window.

"Whither now?" said Amyas, in a tone of desperate resignation.

"Thither! Where else on earth?" and Frank pointed to the light, trembling from head to foot, and pushed on.

"For Heaven's sake! Look at the negroes on the barbeque!"

It was indeed time to stop; for on the barbeque, or terrace of white plaster, which ran all round the front, lay sleeping full twenty black figures.

"What will you do now? You must step over them to gain an entrance."

"Wait here, and I will go up gently towards the window. She may see me. She will see me as I step into the moonlight. At least I know an air by which she will recognise me, if I do but hum a stave."

"Why, you do not even know that that light is hers!—Down, for your life!"

And Amyas dragged him down into the bushes on his left hand; for one of the negroes, wakening suddenly with a cry, had sat up, and began crossing himself four or five times, in fear of "Duppy," and mumbling various charms, aves, or what not.

The light above was extinguished instantly.

"Did you see her?" whispered Frank.

"No."

"I did—the shadow of the face, and the neck! Can I be

mistaken ? ” And then, covering his face with his hands, he murmured to himself, “ Misery ! misery ! So near, and yet impossible ! ”

“ Would it be the less impossible, were you face to face ? Let us go back. We cannot go up without detection, even if our going were of use. Come back, for God’s sake, ere all is lost ! If you have seen her, as you say, you know at least that she is alive, and safe in his house—”

“ As his mistress ? or as his wife ? Do I know that, yet Amyas, and can I depart until I know ? ”

There was a few minutes’ silence, and then Amyas, making one last attempt to awaken Frank to the absurdity of the whole thing, and to laugh him, if possible, out of it, as argument had no effect—

“ My dear fellow, I am very hungry and sleepy ; and this bush is very prickly ; and my boots are full of ants—”

“ So are mine.—Look ! ” and Frank caught Amyas’s arm, and clenched it tight.

For round the further corner of the house a dark cloaked figure stole gently, turning a look now and then upon the sleeping negroes, and came on right toward them.

“ Did I not tell you she would come ? ” whispered Frank, in a triumphant tone.

Amyas was quite bewildered ; and to his mind the apparition seemed magical, and Frank prophetic ; for as the figure came nearer, incredulous as he tried to be, there was no denying that the shape and the walk were exactly those of her, to find whom they had crossed the Atlantic. True, the figure was somewhat taller : but then, “ she must be grown since I saw her,” thought Amyas ; and his heart for the moment beat as fiercely as Frank’s.

But what was that behind her ? Her shadow against the white wall of the house ? Not so. Another figure, cloaked likewise, but taller far, was following on her steps. It could not be Don Guzman, for he was at sea. Who then ? Here was a mystery ; perhaps a tragedy. And both brothers held their breaths, while Amyas felt whether his sword was loose in the sheath.

The Rose (if indeed it was she) was within ten yards of them, when she perceived that she was followed. She gave a little shriek. The cavalier sprang forward, lifted his hat courteously, and joined her, bowing low. The moonlight was full upon his face.

“ It is Eustace, our cousin ! How came he here, in the name of all the fiends ? ”

“ Eustace ! Then that is she after all ! ” said Frank, forgetting everything else in her.

And now flashed across Amyas all that had passed between him

and Eustace in the moorland inn, and Parracombe's story, too, of the suspicious gipsy. Eustace had been beforehand with them, and warned Don Guzman ! All was explained : but how had he got hither ?

The two came on, talking earnestly, and walking at a slow pace, so that the brothers could hear every word.

" But whither are you going, then, my dear Madam ? " they heard Eustace say in a wheedling tone. " Can you wonder if such strange conduct should cause at least sorrow to your admirable and faithful husband ? "

" Husband ! " whispered Frank faintly to Amyas. " Thank God, thank God ! I am content. Let us go. "

But to go was impossible ; for, as fate would have it, the two had stopped just opposite them.

" The inestimable Señor Don Guzman— " began Eustace again.

" What do you mean by praising him to me in this fulsome way. Sir ? Do you suppose that I do not know his virtues better than you ? "

" If you do, Madam " (this was spoken in a harder tone), " it were wise for you to try them less severely, than by wandering down toward the beach on the very night that you know his most deadly enemies are lying in wait to slay him, plunder his house, and most probably to carry you off from him. "

" Carry me off ? I will die first ! "

" Who can prove that to him ? Appearances are at least against you. "

The only answer was a burst of tears.

" Oh ! " sobbed she at last. " And if I have been imprudent, was it not natural to wish to look once more upon an English ship ? Are you not English, as well as I ? Have you no lingering recollections of the dear old land at home ? "

Eustace was silent ; but his face worked more fiercely than ever.

" How can he ever know it ? "

" Why should he not know it ? "

" Ah ! " she burst out passionately, " why not, indeed, while you are here ? You, Sir, the tempter, you the caves-dropper, you the sunderer of loving hearts ! You, serpent, who found our home a paradise, and see it now a hell ! "

" Do you dare to accuse me thus, Madam, without a shadow of evidence ? "

" Dare ? I dare anything, for I know all ! I have watched you, Sir, and I have borne with you too long. "

" Me, Madam, whose only sin towards you, as you should know

by now, is to have loved you too well ? Rose ! Rose ! have you not blighted my life for me—broken my heart ?”

“ Depart, Sir, and tempt me no more ! You have asked me what I dare ; and I dare this, upon my own ground, and in my own garden, I, Donna Rosa de Soto, to bid you leave this place now and for ever, after having insulted me by talking of your love, and tempted me to give up that faith which my husband promised me he would respect and protect. Go, Sir ! ”

The brothers listened breathless with surprise as much as with rage. Love and conscience, and perhaps, too, the pride of her lofty alliance, had converted the once gentle and dreamy Rose into a very Roxana ; but it was only the impulse of a moment. The words had hardly passed her lips, when, terrified at what she had said, she burst into a fresh flood of tears ; while Eustace answered calmly,—

“ I go, Madam : but how know you that I may not have orders, and that, after your last strange speech, my conscience may compel me to obey those orders, to take you with me ? ”

“ Me ? with you ? ”

“ My heart has bled for you, Madam, for many a year.”

And drawing close to her, he whispered in her ear—what, the brothers heard not—but her answer was a shriek which rang through the woods.

“ By Heaven ! ” said Amyas, “ I can stand this no longer. Cut that devil’s throat I must—”

“ She is lost if his dead body is found by her.”

“ We are lost, if we stay here, then,” said Amyas ; “ for those negroes will hurry down at her cry, and then found we must be.”

“ Are you mad, Madam, to betray yourself by your own cries ? The negroes will be here in a moment. I give you one last chance for life, then ; ” and Eustace shouted in Spanish at the top of his voice, “ Help, help, servants ! Your mistress is being carried off by bandits ! ”

“ What do you mean, Sir ? ”

“ Let your woman’s wit supply the rest : and forget not him who thus saves you from disgrace.”

Whether the brothers heard the last words or not, I know not ; but taking for granted that Eustace had discovered them, they sprang to their feet at once, determined to make one last appeal, and then to sell their lives as dearly as they could.

Eustace started back at the unexpected apparition ; but a second glance showed him Amyas’s mighty bulk ; and he spoke calmly,—

“ You see, Madam, I did not call without need. Welcome,

good cousins. My charity, as you perceive, has found means to outstrip your craft ; while the fair lady, as was but natural, has been true to her assignation ”

“ Liar ! ” cried Frank. “ She never knew of our being—”

“ Credat Judæus ! ” answered Eustace : but, as he spoke, Amyas burst through the bushes at him. There was no time to be lost ; and ere the giant could disengage himself from the boughs and shrubs, Eustace had slipped off his long cloak, thrown it over Amyas’s head, and ran up the alley shouting for help.

Mad with rage, Amyas gave chase, but in two minutes more, Eustace was safe among the ranks of the negroes, who came shouting and jabbering down the path.

He rushed back. Frank was just ending some wild appeal to Rose—

“ Your conscience ! your religion !—”

“ No, never ! I can face the chance of death, but not the loss of him. Go ! for God’s sake leave me ! ”

“ You are lost, then,—and I have ruined you ! ”

“ Come off, now or never,” cried Amyas clutching him by the arm, and dragging him away like a child.

“ You forgive me ? ” cried he.

“ Forgive you ? ” and she burst into tears again.

Frank burst into tears also.

“ Let me go back, and die with her—Amyas !—my oath !—my honour ! ” and he struggled to turn back.

Amyas looked back too, and saw her standing calmly, with her hands folded across her breast, awaiting Eustace and the servants ; and he half turned to go back also. Both saw how fearfully appearances had put her into Eustace’s power. Had he not a right to suspect that they were there by her appointment ; that she was going to escape with them ? And would not Eustace use his power ? The thought of the Inquisition crossed their minds. “ Was that the threat which Eustace had whispered ? ” asked he of Frank.

“ It was,” groaned Frank in answer.

For the first and last time in his life, Amyas Leigh stood irresolute.

“ Back, and stab her to the heart first ! ” said Frank, struggling to escape from him.

Oh, if Amyas were but alone, and Frank safe home in England ! To charge the whole mob, kill her, kill Eustace, and then cut his way back again to the ship, or die,—what matter ? as he must die some day,—sword in hand ! But Frank !—and then flashed before his eyes his mother’s hopeless face. Let Rose, let honour,

let the whole world perish, he must save Frank. See ! the negroes were up with her now—past her—away for life ! and once more he dragged his brother down the hill, and through the wicket, only just in time ; for the whole gang of negroes were within ten yards of them in full pursuit.

“ Frank,” said he, sharply, “ if you ever hope to see your mother again, rouse yourself man, and fight ! ” And, without waiting for an answer, he turned, and charged up-hill upon his pursuers, who saw the long bright blade, and fled instantly.

Again he hurried Frank down the hill ; the path wound in zig-zags, and he feared that the negroes would come straight over the cliff, and so cut off his retreat : but the prickly cactuses were too much for them, and they were forced to follow by the path, while the brothers (Frank having somewhat regained his senses) turned every now and then to menace them : but once on the rocky path, stones began to fly fast ; small ones fortunately, and wide and wild for want of light—but when they reached the pebble-beach ? Both were too proud to run ; but, if ever Amyas prayed in his life, he prayed for the last twenty yards before he reached the water-mark.

“ Now, Frank ! down to the boat as hard as you can run, while I keep the curs back.”

“ Amyas ! what do you take me for ? My madness brought you hither : your devotion shall not bring me back without you.”

“ Together, then ! ”

And putting Frank’s arm through his, they hurried down, shouting to their men.

The boat was not fifty yards off : but fast travelling over the pebbles was impossible, and long ere half the distance was crossed, the negroes were on the beach and the storm burst. A volley of great quartz pebbles whistled round their heads.

“ Come on, Frank ! for life’s sake ! Men, to the rescue ! Ah ! what was that ? ”

The dull crash of a pebble against Frank’s fair head ! Drooping like Hyacinthus beneath the blow of the quoit, he sank on Amyas’s arm. The giant threw him over his shoulder, and plunged blindly on,—himself struck again and again.

“ Fire, men ! Give it the black villains ! ”

The arquebuses crackled from the boat in front. What were those dull thuds which answered from behind ? Echoes ? No. Over his head the caliver-balls went screeching. The governor’s guard have turned out, followed them to the beach, fixed their calivers, and are firing over the negroes’ heads, as the savages rush down upon the hapless brothers.

If, as all say, there are moments which are hours, how many hours was Amyas Leigh in reaching that boat's bow ? Alas ! the negroes are there as soon as he, and the guard, having left their calivers, are close behind them, sword in hand. Amyas is up to his knees in water—battered with stones—blinded with blood. The boat is swaying off and on against the steep pebble bank : he clutches at it—misses—falls headlong—rises half-choked with water : but Frank is still in his arms. Another heavy blow—a confused roar of shouts, shots, curses—a confused mass of negroes and English, foam and pebbles—and he recollects no more.

* * * * *

He is lying in the stern-sheets of the boat ; stiff, weak, half blind with blood. He looks up : the moon is still bright overhead : but they are away from the shore now, for the wave-crests are dancing white before the land-breeze, high above the boats' side. The boat seems strangely empty. Two men are pulling instead of six ! And what is this lying heavy across his chest ? He pushes, and is answered by a groan. He puts his hand down to rise, and is answered by another groan.

"What's this ?"

"All that are left of us," says Simon Evans of Clovelly.

"All ?" The bottom of the boat seemed paved with human bodies. "Oh God ! oh God ! moans Amyas, trying to rise. "And where—where is Frank ? Frank !"

"Mr. Frank !" cries Evans. There is no answer.

"Dead ?" shrieks Amyas. "Look for him, for God's sake, look !" and struggling from under his living load, he peers into each pale and bleeding face.

"Where is he ? Why don't you speak ; forward there ?"

"Because we have nought to say, Sir," answers Evans, almost surlily.

Frank was not there.

"Put the boat about ! To the shore !" roars Amyas.

"Look over the gunwale, and judge for yourself, Sir !"

The waves are leaping fierce and high before a furious land-breeze. Return is impossible.

"Cowards ! villains ! traitors ! hounds ! to have left him behind."

"Listen you to me, Captain Amyas Leigh," says Simon Evans, resting on his oar ; "and hang me for mutiny, if you will, when we're aboard, if we ever get there. Isn't it enough to bring us out to death (as you knew yourself, Sir, for you're prudent enough) to please that poor young gentleman's fancy about a wench ; but

you must call coward an honest man that have saved your life this night, and not a one of us but has his wound to show ? ”

Amyas was silent, the rebuke was just.

“ I tell you, Sir, if we’ve hove a stone out of this boat since we got off, we’ve hove two hundredweight, and, if the Lord had not fought for us, she’d have been beat to noggin-staves there on the beach.”

“ How did I come nere, then ? ”

“ Tom Hart dragged you in out of five feet water, and then thrust the boat off, and had his brains beat out for reward. All were knocked down but us two. So help me God, we thought that you had hove Mr. Frank on board just as you were knocked down, and saw William Frost drag him in.”

But William Frost was lying senseless in the bottom of the boat. There was no explanation. After all, none was needed.

So ended that fatal venture of mistaken chivalry.

CHAPTER XVII

SPANISH BLOODHOUNDS AND ENGLISH MASTIFFS

WHEN the sun leaped up the next morning, and the tropic light flashed suddenly into the tropic day, Amyas was pacing the deck, with dishevelled hair and torn clothes, his eyes red with rage and weeping, his heart full—how can I describe it ? Picture it to yourselves, you who have ever lost a brother ; and you who have not, thank God that you know nothing of his agony. Full of impossible projects, he strode and staggered up and down, as the ship thrashed close-hauled through the rolling seas. He would go back and burn the villa. He would take Guayra, and have the life of every man in it in return for his brother’s. “ We can do it, lads ! ” he shouted. “ If Drake took Nombre de Dios, we can take La Guayra.” And every voice shouted, “ Yes.”

“ We will have it, Amyas, and have Frank too, yet,” cried Cary ; but Amyas shook his head. He knew, and knew not why he knew, that all the ports in New Spain would never restore to him that one beloved face.

“ Yes, he shall be well avenged. And look there ! There is the first crop of our vengeance.” And he pointed toward the shore, where three sails appeared, not five miles to windward.

“ There are the Spanish bloodhounds on our heels, the same ships which we saw yesterday off Guayra. Back, lads, and welcome them, if they were a dozen.”

There was a murmur of applause from all around ; and if any young heart sank for a moment at the prospect of fighting three ships at once, it was awed into silence by the cheer which rose from all the older men, and by Salvation Yeo's stentorian voice.

"If there were a dozen, the Lord is with us."

"Amen !" cried Cary ; and the ship was kept still closer to the wind.

Amyas had revived at the sight of battle. He no longer felt his wounds, and ere a quarter of an hour had passed, his voice cried firmly and cheerfully as of old—

"Now, my masters, let us serve God, and then to breakfast, and after that clear for action."

Jack Brimblecombe read the daily prayers, and the prayers before a fight at sea, and his honest voice trembled, as, in the Prayer for all Conditions of Men, (in spite of Amyas's despair), he added, "and especially for our dear brother, Mr. Francis Leigh, perhaps captive among the idolaters ;" and so they rose.

"Now, then," said Amyas, "to breakfast. A Frenchman fights best fasting, a Dutchman drunk, an Englishman full, and a Spaniard when the devil is in him, and that's always."

Amyas stood still steering. His face was grown seven years older in the last night. A terrible set calm was on him. Woe to the man who came across him that day !

"There are three of them, you see, my masters," said he, as the crew came on deck again. "A big ship forward, and two galleys astern of her. The big ship may keep ; she is a race ship, and if we can but recover the wind of her, we will see whether our height is not a match for her length. We must give her the slip, and take the galleys first."

But the great ship is now within two musket-shots of the Rose, with the golden flag of Spain floating at her poop ; and her trumpets are shouting defiance up the breeze, from a dozen brazen throats, which two or three answer lustily from the Rose, from whose poop flies the flag of England, and from her fore the arms of Leigh and Cary side by side, and over them the ship and bridge of the good town of Bideford.

"Steady, helm !" said Amyas. "What is he after now ?"

The Spaniard, who had been coming upon them right down the wind under a press of sail, took in his light canvas.

"He don't know what to make of our waiting for him so bold," said the helmsman.

"He does though, and means to fight us," cried another. "See, he is hauling up the foot of his mainsail : but he wants to keep the wind of us."

"Let him try then," quoth Amyas. "Keep her closer still. Let no one fire till we are about. Man the starboard guns ; to starboard, and wait, all small arm men. Pass the order down to the gunner, and bid all fire high, and take the rigging."

Bang went one of the Spaniard's bow-guns, and the shot went wide. Then another and another, while the men fidgeted about, looked at the priming of their muskets, and loosened their arrows in the sheaf.

"Lie down, men, and sing a Psalm. When I want you, I'll call you. Closer still, if you can, helmsman, and we will try a short ship against a long one. We can sail two points nearer the wind than he."

As Amyas had calculated, the Spaniard would gladly enough have stood across the Rose's bows, but knowing the English readiness, dare not for fear of being raked ; so her only plan, if she did not intend to shoot past her foe down to leeward, was to put her head close to the wind, and wait for her on the same tack.

Amyas laughed to himself. "Hold on yet awhile. More ways of killing a cat than choking her with cream. Drew, there, are your men ready ?"

"Ay, ay, Sir !" and on they went, closing fast with the Spaniard, till within a pistol-shot.

"Ready about !" and about she went like an eel, and ran upon the opposite tack right under the Spaniard's stern. The Spaniard, astounded at the quickness of the manœuvre, hesitated a moment, and then tried to get about also, as his only chance ; but it was too late, and while his lumbering length was still hanging in the wind's eye, Amyas's bowsprit had all but scraped his quarter, and the Rose passed slowly across his stern at ten yards' distance.

"Now then !" roared Amyas. "Fire, and with a will ! Have at her, archers : have at her muskets all !" and in an instant a storm of bar and chain-shot, round and canister, swept the proud Don from stem to stern, while through the white cloud of smoke the musket-balls, and the still deadlier cloth-yard arrows, whistled and rushed upon their venomous errand. Down went the steersman, and every soul who manned the poop. Down went the mizen top-mast, in went the stern-windows and quarter galleries ; and when the smoke cleared away the golden flag of Spain hung trailing in the water. The ship, her tiller shot away, and her helmsmen killed, staggered helplessly a moment, and then fell up into the wind.

"Well done, men of Devon !" shouted Amyas, as cheers rent the welkin.

"She has struck," cried some, as the deafening hurrahs died away.

"Not a bit," said Amyas. "Hold on, helmsman, and leave her to patch her tackle while we settle the galleys."

On they shot merrily, and long ere the armada could get herself to rights again, were two good miles to windward, with the galleys sweeping down fast upon them.

And two venomous-looking craft they were, as they shot through the short chopping sea upon some forty oars a-piece, stretching their long sword-fish snouts over the water, as if snuffing for their prey. Behind this long snout a strong square forecastle was crammed with soldiers, and the muzzles of cannon grinned out through port-holes, not only in the sides of the fore-castle, but forward in the line of the galley's course, thus enabling her to keep up a continual fire on a ship right ahead.

The long low waist was packed full of the slaves, some five or six to each oar, and down the centre, between the two banks, the English could see the slave-drivers walking up and down a long gangway, whip in hand.

"Must we fire upon the slaves?" asked more than one, as the thought crossed him.

Amyas sighed.

"Spare them all you can, in God's name: but if they try to run us down, rake them we must, and God forgive us."

The two galleys came on abreast of each other, some forty yards apart. To outmanœuvre their oars as he had done the ship's sails, Amyas knew was impossible. To run from them, was to be caught between them and the ship.

He made up his mind, as usual, to the desperate game.

"Lay her head up in the wind, helmsman, and we will wait for them."

They were now within musket-shot, and opened fire from their bow-guns; but, owing to the chopping sea, their aim was wild. Amyas, as usual, withheld his fire.

The Spaniards, seeing him wait for them, gave a shout of joy—was the Englishman mad? And the two galleys converged rapidly, intending to strike him full, one on each bow.

They were within forty yards—another minute, and the shock would come. The Englishman's helm went up, his yards creaked round, and gathering way, he plunged upon the larboard galley.

"A dozen gold nobles to him who brings down the steersman!" shouted Cary, who had his cue.

And a flight of arrows from the fore-castle rattled upon the galley's quarter-deck.

Hit or not hit, the steersman lost his nerve, and skrank from the coming shock. The galley's helm went up to port, and her

beak slid all but harmless along Amyas's bow ; a long dull grind, and then loud crack on crack, as the *Rose* sawed slowly through the bank of oars from stem to stern, hurling the wretched slaves in heaps upon each other ; and ere her mate on the other side could swing round, to strike him in his new position, Amyas's whole broadside, great and small, had been poured into her at pistol-shot, answered by a yell which rent their ears and hearts.

"Spare the slaves ! Fire at the soldiers !" cried Amyas ; but the work was too hot for much discrimination.

Five minutes' hard cutting, hand to hand, and the poop was clear. The soldiers in the forecastle had been able to give them no assistance, open as they lay to the arrows and musketry from the *Rose's* lofty stern. Amyas rushed along the central gangway, shouting in Spanish, "Freedom to the slaves ! death to the masters !" clambered into the forecastle, followed close by his swarm of wasps, and set them so good an example how to use their stings, that in three minutes more, there was not a Spaniard on board who was not dead or dying.

"Let the slaves free !" shouted he. "Throw us a hammer down, men. Hark ! there's an English voice !"

There is indeed. From amid the wreck of broken oars and writhing limbs, a voice is shrieking in broadest Devon to the master, who is looking over the side.

"Oh, Robert Drew ! Robert Drew ! Come down, and take me out of hell !"

"Who be you, in the name of the Lord ?"

"Don't you mind William Prust, that Captain Hawkins left behind in the Honduras, years and years ago ? There's nine of us aboard, if your shot hasn't put 'em out of their misery. Come down, if you've a Christian heart, come down !"

Utterly forgetful of all discipline, Drew leaps down hammer in hand, and the two old comrades rush into each other's arms.

Why make a long story of what took but five minutes to do ? The nine men are freed and helped on board, to be hugged and kissed by old comrades and young kinsmen ; while the remaining slaves, furnished with a couple of hammers, are told to free themselves and help the English. The wretches answer by a shout ; and Amyas, once more safe on board again, dashes after the other galley, which has been hovering out of reach of his guns ; but there is no need to trouble himself about her ; sickened with what she has got, she is struggling right up wind, leaning over to one side, and seemingly ready to sink.

"Are there any English on board of her ?" asks Amyas, loth to lose the chance of freeing a countryman.

"Never a one, Sir, thank God."

So they set to work to repair damages.

"The big one will have the wind of you yet," exclaimed one of the released men.

"So she will," said Amyas, who has overheard ; but so great is the curiosity on all hands, that he has some trouble in getting the men to quarters again ; indeed, they only go on condition of parting among themselves with them the new-comers, each to tell his sad and strange story. How after Captain Hawkins, constrained by famine, had put them ashore, they wandered in misery till the Spaniards took them ; how instead of hanging them the Dons fed and clothed them, and allotted them as servants to various gentlemen about Mexico, where they thrived, turned their hands to all manner of trades, and made much money, and some of them were married, even to women of wealth ; so that all went well, until the fatal year 1574, when, "much against the minds of many of the Spaniards themselves, the cruel and bloody Inquisition was established for the first time in the Indies."

Hardly were the decks cleared afresh, and the damage repaired as best it could be, when "the big one" came ranging up to leeward, as closehauled as she could.

She was, as I said, a long flush-decked ship of full five hundred tons, more than double the size, in fact, of *Rose* ; and many a bold heart beat loud as she began firing away merrily, determined to wipe out in English blood the disgrace of her late foil.

"Never mind, my merry masters," said Amyas, "she has quantity and we quality."

So they waited for five minutes more, and then set to work quietly, after the fashion of English mastiffs, though, like those mastiffs, they waxed right mad before three rounds were fired.

Amyas, having, as he had said, the wind, and being able to get nearer it than the Spaniard, kept his place at easy point-blank range for his two eighteen-pounder culverins, which Yeo and his mate worked with terrible effect.

"We are lacking her through and through every shot," said he. "Leave the small ordnance alone yet awhile, and we shall sink her without them."

"Whing, whing," went the Spaniard's shot, like so many humming-tops, through the rigging far above their heads.

"What the murrain is gone, aloft there ?"

Alas ! a crack, a flap, a rattle ; and blank dismay ! An unlucky shot had cut the foremast (already wounded) in two, and all forward was a mass of dangling wreck.

"Forward, and cut away the wreck !" said Amyas, unmoved.

"Small-arm men, be ready. He will be aboard of us in five minutes !"

It was too true. The Rose, unmanageable from the loss of her head-sail, lay at the mercy of the Spaniard ; and the archers and musqueteers had hardly time to range themselves to leeward, when the Madre Dolorosa's chains were grinding against the Rose's, and grapples tossed on board from stem to stern.

And then began a fight most fierce and fell ; the Spaniards, according to their fashion, attempting to board, the English, amid fierce shouts of "God and the Queen !" "God and St. George for England !" sweeping them back by showers of arrows and musquet balls, thrusting them down with pikes, hurling grenades and stink-pots from the tops ; while the swivels on both sides poured their grape, and bar, and chain, and the great main-deck guns, thundering muzzle to muzzle, made both ships quiver and recoil, as they smashed the round shot through and through each other.

So it raged for an hour or more, till all arms were weary, and all tongues clove to the mouth. And sick men, rotting with scurvy, scrambled up on deck, and fought with the strength of madness ; and tiny powder-boys, handing up cartridges from the hold, laughed and cheered as the shots rang past their ears. And now and then an opening in the smoke showed the Spanish captain, in his suit of black steel armour, standing cool and proud, guiding and pointing, but too lofty a gentleman to soil his glove with aught but a knightly swordhilt : while Amyas and Will, after the fashion of the English gentleman, had stripped themselves nearly as bare as their own sailors, and were cheering, thrusting, hewing, and hauling, here, there, and everywhere.

At last there was a lull in that wild storm. No shot was heard from the Spaniard's upper-deck. Amyas leaped into the mizen rigging, and looked through the smoke. Dead men he could descry through the blinding veil : dead men and dying : but no man upon his feet. The last volley had swept the deck clear ; one by one had dropped below to escape that fiery shower : and alone at the helm, grinding his teeth with rage, his mustachios curling up to his very eyes, stood the Spanish captain.

Now was the moment for a counter-stroke. Amyas shouted for the boarders, and in two minutes more he was over the side, and clutching at the Spaniard's mizen rigging.

What was this ? The distance between him and the enemy's side was widening. Was she sheering off ? Yes—and rising too, growing bodily higher every moment, as if by magic. Amyas looked up in astonishment ; and saw what it was. The Spaniard was heeling fast over to leeward away from him. Her masts were

all sloping forward, swifter and swifter—the end was come, then !

“Back ! in God’s name back, men ! She is sinking by the head !” And with much ado some were dragged back, some leaped back—all but old Michael Heard.

With hair and beard floating in the wind, the bronzed naked figure, like some weird old Indian fakir, still climbed on steadfastly up the mizen-chains of the Spaniard, hatchet in hand.

“Come back, Michael ! Leap while you may !” shouted a dozen voices. Michael turned,—

“And what should I come back for then, to go home where no one knoweth me ? I’ll die like an Englishman this day, or I’ll know the reason why !” and turning, he sprang in over the bulwarks, as the huge ship rolled up more and more, like a dying whale, exposing all her long black bulk almost down to the keel.

Suddenly the glorious creature righted herself ; and rose again, as if in noble shame, for one last struggle with her doom. Righted : but only for a moment, long enough to let her crew come pouring wildly up on deck, with cries and prayers, and rush aft to the poop, where, under the flag of Spain, stood the tall captain, his left hand on the standard-staff, his sword pointed in his right.

“Back, men !” they heard him cry, “and die like valiant mariners.”

Some of them ran to the bulwarks, and shouted, “Mercy ! We surrender !” and the English broke into a cheer.

“Silence !” shouted Amyas. “I take no surrender from mutineers. Señor,” cried he to the captain, springing into the rigging, and taking off his hat, “for the love of God and these men, strike ! and surrender a buena guerra.”

The Spaniard lifted his hat, and bowed courteously, and answered, “Impossible, Señor. No guerra is good which stains my honour.”

“God have mercy on you, then !”

“Amen !” said the Spaniard, crossing himself.

She gave one awful lunge forward, and dived under the coming swell, hurling her crew into the eddies. Nothing but the point of her poop remained, and there stood the stern and steadfast Don, cap-a-pie in his glistening black armour, immovable as a man of iron, while over him the flag, which claimed the empire of both worlds, flaunted its gold aloft in the glare of the tropic noon.

“He shall not carry that flag to the devil with him ; I will have it yet, if I die for it !” said Will Cary, and rushed to the side to leap overboard : but Amyas stopped him.

"Let him die as he has lived, with honour."

Another moment, and nothing remained of the Madre Dolorosa but a few floating spars and struggling wretches while a great awe fell upon all men, and a solemn silence.

"Ah !" said Salvation Yeo, "And now, then, my masters, shall we in shore again, and burn Guayra ?"

"To St. Jago be it," said Amyas, "if we can get there : but—God help us !" —

And he looked round sadly enough ; while no one needed that he should finish his sentence, or explain his "but."

And it would have been well if faintness and weariness had been all that was the matter ; but now that the excitement was over, the collapse came ; and the men sat down listlessly and sulkily by twos and threes upon the deck, starting and wincing when they heard some poor fellow below cry out under the surgeon's knife ; or murmuring to each other that all was lost. Drew tried in vain to rouse them, telling them that all depended on rigging a jury-mast forward as soon as possible. They answered only by growls ; and at last broke into open reproaches. Then Yeo and the carpenter came aft, and told Amyas in a low voice,

"We are hit somewhere forward, below the waterline, Sir. She leaks a terrible deal, and the Lord will not vouchsafe to us to lay our hands on the place, for all our searching."

"And where are we going, when the mast's up ?" shouted some saucy hand from behind.

"Where you daren't follow us alone by yourself, so you had better keep us company," replied Yeo.

"I'll tell you where we are going, lads," said Amyas. "Like it or leave it as you will, I have no secrets from my crew. We are going inshore there to find a harbour, and careen the ship."

There was a start and a murmur.

"Inshore ? Into the Spaniards' mouths ?"

"All in the Inquisition in a week's time."

"Better stay here, and be drowned."

"You're right in that last," shouts Cary. "That's the right death for blind puppies. Look you ! I don't know in the least where we are, and I hardly know stem from stern aboard ship ; and the captain may be right or wrong—that's nothing to me ; but this I know, that I am a soldier, and will obey orders ; and where he goes, I go ; and whosoever hinders me, must walk up my sword to do it."

Amyas pressed Cary's hand, and then—

"And here's my broadside next, men. I'll go nowhere, and do nothing without the advice of Salvation Yeo and Robert Drew ;

and if any man in the ship knows better than these two, let him up, and we'll give him a hearing. Eh, Pelicans ? ”

“ We have five shot between wind and water, and one somewhere below. Can we face a gale of wind in that state, or can we not ? ”

Silence.

“ Can we get home with a leak in our bottom ? ”

Silence.

“ Then what can we do but run inshore, and take our chance ? Speak ! It's a coward's trick to do nothing because what we must do is not pleasant.”

Silence still.

“ Come along now ! Here's the wind again round with the sun, and up to the north-west. In with her ! ”

Sulkily enough, but unable to deny the necessity, the men set to work, and the vessel's head was put toward the land ; but when she began to slip through the water, the leak increased so fast, that they were kept hard at work at the pumps for the rest of the afternoon.

The current had by this time brought them abreast of the bay of Higuerote ; and, luckily for them, safe out of the short heavy swell which it causes round Cape Codera. Looking inland, they had now to the south-west that noble headland, backed by the Carracca mountains, range on range, up to the Silla and the Neguatar ; while, right a-head of them to the south, the shore sank suddenly into a low line of mangrove-wood, backed by primaeval forest. As they ran inward, all eyes were strained greedily to find some opening in the mangrove belt ; but none was to be seen for some time. The lead was kept going ; and every fresh heave announced shallower water.

They found a suitable river opening and a little way upstream place where they could beach the vessel.

That night every man of the boat's crew, save Amyas, were down with raging fever ; before ten the next morning, five more men were taken, and others sickening fast.

CHAPTER XVIII

HOW THEY TOOK THE COMMUNION UNDER THE TREE AT HIGUEROTE

SO serious was this attack of fever that Amyas called a council of war, or rather a sanitary commission, the next morning ; for he was fairly at his wit's end. The men were panic-stricken, ready

to mutiny : Amyas told them that he could not see any possible good which could accrue to them by killing him, or being killed by him ; and then went below to consult. The doctor talked mere science, or non-science, about humours, complexions, and animal spirits. Jack Brimblecombe, mere pulpit, about its being the visitation of God. Cary, mere despair, though he jested over it with a smile. Yeo, mere stoic fatalism, though he quoted Scripture to back the same. Drew, the master, had nothing to say. His "business was to sail the ship, and not to cure calentures."

Whereon, Amyas clutched his locks, according to custom ; and at last broke forth—

"Doctor ! a fig for your humours and complexions ! Can you cure a man's humours, or change his complexion ? Don't shove off your ignorance on God, Sir. I ask you what's the reason of this sickness, and you don't know. The mischief's in the air, and nowhere else. I felt it run through me coming down last night, and smelt it like any sewer : and if it was not in the air, why was my boat's crew taken first, tell me that ?"

There was no answer.

"Then I'll tell you why they were taken first : because the mist, when we came through it, only rose five or six feet above the stream, and we were in it, while you on board were above it. And those that were taken on board this morning, every one of them, slept on the maindeck, and every one of them, too, was in fear of the fever, whereby I judge two things,—Keep as high as you can, and fear nothing but God, and we're all safe yet."

"I remember now" said Yeo, "to have heard the Spaniards say, how these calentures lay always in the low ground, and never came more than a few hundred feet above the sea."

"Let us go up those few hundred feet, then."

Every man looked at Amyas, and then at his neighbour.

"Gentlemen, 'Look the devil straight in the face, if you would hit him in the right place.' We cannot get the ship to sea as she is ; and if we could, we cannot go home, empty-handed ; and we surely cannot stay here to die of fever.—We must leave the ship and go inland."

"Inland ?" answered every voice but Yeo's.

"Up those hundred feet which Yeo talks of. Up to the mountains ; stockade a camp, and get our sick and provisions thither.—"

After a certain measure of grumbling, this was done.

In that mountain-nook the party spent some ten days and more. Several of the sick men died, some from the fever superadded to their wounds ; some, probably, from having been bled by the surgeon ; the others mended steadily, by the help of certain herbs

which Yeo administered, much to the disgust of the doctor, who, of course, wanted to bleed the poor fellows all round, and was all but mutinous when Amyas stayed his hand. In the meanwhile, by dint of daily trips to the ship, provisions were plentiful enough.

One noon Amyas saw slipping along the shore from the westward, a large ship under easy sail, and recognised in her, or thought he did, the ship which they had passed upon their way.

If it was she, she must have run past them to La Guayra in the night, and have now returned, perhaps, to search for them.

She crept along slowly. He was in hopes that she might pass the river's mouth : but no. She lay too close to the shore ; and, after a while, Amyas saw two boats pull in from her, and vanish behind the mangroves.

Sliding down a liane, he told what he had seen. The men, tired of inactivity, received the news with a shout of joy, and set to work to make all ready for their guests. Four brass swivels, which they had brought up, were mounted, fixed in logs, so as to command the path ; the musketeers, and archers clustered round them with their tackle ready, and half-a-dozen good marksmen volunteered into the cotton-tree with their arquebuses, as a post whence " a man might have very pretty shooting." Prayers followed as a matter of course, and dinner also ; but two weary hours passed before there was any sign of the Spaniards.

Presently a wreath of white smoke curled up from the swamp, and then the report of a caliver. Then, amid the growls of the English, the Spanish flag run up above the trees, and floated—horrible to behold—at the mast-head of the *Rose*. They were signalling the ship for more hands ; and, in effect, a third boat soon pushed off and vanished into the forest.

Another hour, during which the men had thoroughly lost their temper, but not their hearts, by waiting ; and talked so loud, and strode up and down so wildly, that Amyas had to warn them that there was no need to betray themselves ; that the Spaniards might not find them after all ; that they might pass the stockade close without seeing it ; that, unless they hit off the track at once, they would probably return to their ship for the present ; and exacted a promise from them that they would be perfectly silent till he gave the word to fire.

Which wise commands had scarcely passed his lips, when, in the path below, glanced the head-piece of a Spanish soldier, and then another and another.

" Fools ! " whispered Amyas to Cary ; " they are coming up in single file, rushing on their own death. Lie close, men ! "

The path was so narrow that two could seldom come up abreast,

and so steep that the enemy had much ado to struggle and stumble upwards. The men seemed half unwilling to proceed, and hung back more than once ; but Amyas could hear an authoritative voice behind, and presently there emerged to the front, sword in hand, a figure at which Amyas and Cary both started.

"Is it he?"

"Surely I know those legs among a thousand, though they are in armour."

"It is my turn for him, now. Cary, remember ! Silence, silence, men !"

The Spaniards seemed to feel that they were leading a forlorn hope. Don Guzman (for there was little doubt that it was he) had much ado to get them on at all.

"The fellows have heard how gently we handled the Guayra squadron," whispers Cary, "and have no wish to become fellow-martyrs with the captain of the Madre Dolorosa."

At last the Spaniards get up the steep slope to within forty yards of the stockade, and pause, suspecting a trap, and puzzled by the complete silence. Amyas leaps on the top of it, a white flag in his hand ; but his heart beats so fiercely at the sight of that hated figure, that he can hardly get out the words,—

"Don Guzman, the quarrel is between you and me, not between your men and mine. I would have sent in a challenge to you at La Guayra, but you were away ; I challenge you now to single combat."

"Lutheran dog, I have a halter for you but no sword ! As you served us at Smerwick, we will serve you now. Pirate and ravisher ! you and yours shall share Oxenham's fate, as you have copied his crimes, and learn what it is to set foot unbidden on the dominions of the King of Spain."

"The devil take you and the King of Spain together !" shouts Amyas, laughing loudly. "Fire, men ! and God defend the right !"

The front ranks fell over each other in heaps ; the rear ones turned and ran ; overtaken, nevertheless, by the English bullets and arrows, which tumbled them headlong down the steep path.

"Out, men, and charge them. See ! the Don is running like the rest !" And scrambling over the abattis, Amyas and about thirty followed them fast ; for he had hope of learning from some prisoner his brother's fate.

Amyas, afraid lest they should rally and surround his small party, withdrew sorely against his will, and found in the pathway fourteen Spaniards, but all dead.

Amyas drags out of the bushes an Indian lad of sixteen, who

slightly wounded, is crawling away like a copper snake along the ground. He is the only person they catch alive.

"The black vermin has sent an arrow through my leg ; and poisoned too most like," grumbles the boy.

"God grant not : but an Indian is worth his weight in gold to us now," said Amyas, tucking his prize under his arm like a bundle. The lad, as soon as he saw there was no escape, resigned himself to his fate with true Indian stoicism, was brought in, and treated kindly enough, but refused to eat. For which, after much questioning, he gave as a reason, that he would make them kill him at once ; for fat him they should not ; and gradually gave them to understand that the English always (so at least the Spaniards said) fattened and ate their prisoners like the Caribs ; and till he saw them go out and bury the bodies of the Spaniards, nothing would persuade him that the corpses were not to be cooked for supper.

However, kind words, kind looks, and the present of that inestimable treasure—a knife, brought him to reason ; and he told Amyas that he belonged to a Spaniard who had an "encomienda" of Indians some fifteen miles to the south-west ; that he had fled from his master, and lived by hunting for some months past ; and having seen the ship where she lay moored, and boarded her in hope of plunder, had been surprised therein by the Spaniards, and forced by threats to go with them as a guide in their search for the English. But now came a part of his story which filled the soul of Amyas with delight. He was an Indian of the Llanos, or great savannahs which lay to the southward beyond the mountains, and had actually been upon the Orinoco. He had been stolen as a boy by some Spaniards. Did he know the way back again ? Who could ask such a question of an Indian ? And the lad's black eyes flashed fire, as Amyas offered him liberty and iron enough for a dozen Indians, if he would lead them through the passes of the mountains, and southward to the mighty river, where lay their golden hopes.

Now was the time to speak ; and, assembling his men around him, Amyas opened his whole heart, simply and manfully. This was their only hope of safety. Some of them had murmured that they should perish like John Oxenham's crew. This plan was rather the only way to avoid perishing like them. Don Guzman would certainly return to seek them ; and not only he, but land-forces from St. Jago. There was but this one chance ; and on it Amyas, the first and last time in his life, waxed eloquent, and set forth the glory of the enterprise, the service to the Queen, the salvation of heathens, and the certainty that, if successful, they

should win honour, and wealth, and everlasting fame, beyond that of Cortes or Pizarro, till the men, sulky at first, warmed.

"This," said Amyas, "is indeed the proudest day of my life ! I have lost one brother, but I have gained fourscore. God do so to me, and more also, if I do not deal with you according to the trust which you have put in me this day !"

So underneath that giant ceiba-tree, those valiant men, reduced by battle and sickness to some eighty, swore a great oath, and kept that oath like men. To search for the golden city of Manoa for two full years to come, whatever might befall ; to stand to each other for weal or woe ; to obey their officers to the death ; to murmur privately against no man, but bring all complaints to a council of war ; to use no profane oaths, but serve God daily with prayer ; to take by violence from no man, save from their natural enemies the Spaniards ; to be civil and merciful to all savages, and chaste and courteous to all women ; to bring all booty and all food into the common stock, and observe to the utmost their faith with the adventurers who had fitted out the ship ; and, finally, to march at sunrise the next morning toward the south, trusting in God to be their guide.

CHAPTER XIX

THE BANKS OF THE META

NEARLY three years are past and gone since that little band had knelt at evensong beneath the giant tree of Guayra. Through untrodden hills and forests, over a space of some eight hundred miles in length by four hundred in breadth, they had been seeking for the Golden City, and they had sought in vain. Amyas and Cary, Brimblecombe, Yeo, and the Indian lad, who has followed them in all their wanderings, alive and well : but as far as ever from Manoa, and its fairy lake, and golden palaces, and all the wonders of the Indian's tale. Again and again in their wanderings they had heard faint rumours of its existence, and started off in some fresh direction, to meet only a fresh disappointment, and hope deferred which maketh sick the heart.

There they sit, four and forty out of the eighty-four who left the tree of Guayra :—where are the rest ?

Drew, the master, lies on the banks of the Rio Negro, and five brave fellows by him, slain in fight by the poisoned arrows of the Indians. Two more lie amid the valleys of the Andes, frozen to death by the fierce slaty hail which sweeps down from the condor's

eyrie ; four more were drowned at one of the rapids of the Orinoco ; five or six more wounded men are left behind at another rapid among friendly Indians, to be recovered when they can be : perhaps never. Fever, snakes, jaguars, alligators, cannibal fish, electric eels, have thinned their ranks month by month, and of their march through the primæval wilderness no track remains, except those lonely graves.

And there the survivors sit, beside the silent stream, beneath the tropic moon ; sun-dried and lean, but strong and bold as ever, with the quiet fire of English courage burning undimmed in every eye, and the genial smile of English mirth fresh on every lip. Their beards have grown down upon their breasts ; their long hair is knotted on their heads, like women's, to keep off the burning sunshine. Their ammunition is long since spent, their muskets, spoilt by the perpetual vapour-bath of the steaming woods, are left behind as useless in a cave by some cataract of the Orinoco : but their swords are bright and terrible as ever ; and they carry bows of a strength which no Indian arm can bend, and arrows pointed with the remnants of their armour ; many of them, too, are armed with the pocuna, or blowgun of the Indians,—more deadly, because more silent, than the firearms which they have left behind them. So they have wandered, and so they will wander still, the lords of the forest and its beasts ; terrible to all hostile Indians, but kindly, just, and generous to all who will deal faithfully with them, and many a smooth-chinned Carib and Ature, Solimo and Guahiba, recounts with wonder and admiration the righteousness of the bearded heroes, who proclaimed themselves the deadly foes of the faithless and murderous Spaniard, and spoke to them of the great and good Queen beyond the seas, who would send her warriors to deliver and avenge the oppressed Indian.

The men are sleeping among the trees, some on the ground, and some in grass-hammocks slung between the stems. All is silent, save the heavy plunge of the tapir in the river, as he tears up the water-weeds for his night's repast.

A council of war is going on beside the watch-fire, between the three adventurers and the faithful Yco. A hundred times have they held such a council, and in vain ; and, for aught they know, this one will be as fruitless as those which have gone before it. Nevertheless, it is a more solemn one than usual ; for the two years during which they had agreed to search for Manoa are long past, and some new place must be determined on, unless they intend to spend the rest of their lives in that green wilderness.

" Well," says Will Cary, taking his cigar out of his mouth, " at

least we have got something out of those last Indians. It is a comfort to have a puff at tobacco once more, after three weeks' fasting."

"For me," said Jack Brimblecombe, "Heaven forgive me ! but when I get the magical leaf between my teeth again, I feel tempted to sit as still as a chimney, and smoke till my dying day, without stirring hand or foot."

"Then I shall forbid you tobacco, Master Parson," said Amyas; "for we must be up and away again to-morrow. We have been idling here three mortal days, and nothing done."

"Shall we ever do anything ? I think the gold of Manoa is like the gold which lies where the rainbow touches the ground, always a field beyond you."

Amyas was silent awhile, and so were the rest. There was no denying that their hopes were all but gone.

"There is but one more chance," said he at length, "and that is, the mountains to the east of the Orinoco, where we failed first."

Cary seemed to favour the idea.

"Shall we try it once more ?" said Amyas. "This river ought to run into the Orinoco ; and once there, we are again at the very foot of the mountains."

"Remember," said Jack, "to beware of the Amazons."

"What, Jack, afraid of a parcel of women ?"

"Why not ?" said Jack, "I wouldn't run from a man, as you know : but a woman—it's not natural, like."

"Gentlemen !" said Yeo, "where you go, I go ; and not only I, but every man of us, I doubt not : but we have lost now half our company, and spent our ammunition ; so we are no better men, were it not for our swords, than these naked heathens round us. Now it was, as you all know, by the wonder and noise of their ordnance, that both Cortes and Pizarro, those imps of Satan, made their golden conquests ; with which if we could have astounded the people of Manoa—"

"Having first found the said people," laughed Amyas. "It is like the old fable. Every craftsman thinks his own trade the one pillar of the commonweal."

"Well ! your worship," quoth Yeo, "it may be that being a gunner, I overprize guns. But it don't need slate and pencil to do this sum—Are forty men without shot as good as eighty with ?"

"Thou art right, old fellow ; right enough. Our chance is over, I believe, though I dare not confess as much to the men."

"Sir," said Yeo, "I have a feeling on me that the Lord's hand is against us in this matter."

There was a simple majesty about old Yeo when he broke forth in utterances like these.

"Amen ! 'amen ! my masters all : and it has been on my mind, too, this long time, that there is a providence against our going east ; for see how this two years past, whenever we have pushed eastward, we have fallen into trouble, and lost good men ; and whenever we went Westward-ho, we have prospered ; and do prosper to this day."

"And what is more, gentlemen," said Yeo, "if, as Scripture says, dreams are from the Lord, I verily believe mine last night came from Him ; for as I lay by the fire, Sirs, I heard my little maid's voice calling of me, as plain as ever I heard in my life ; and the very same words, Sirs, which she learned from me and my good comrade, William Penberthy, to say, ' Westward-ho ! jolly mariners all ! ' "

"So let it be, Yeo, if the rest agree : but what shall we do to the westward ? " Amyas asked.

"Do ? " said Cary ; "there's plenty to do ; for there's plenty of gold, and plenty of Spaniards too, they say, on the other side of these mountains ; so that our swords will not rust for lack of adventures, my gay knights-errant all."

Before night was half through, a plan was matured. They would cross the Cordillera to Santa Fe de Bogota, of the wealth whereof both Yeo and Amyas had often heard in the Pacific : try to seize either the town, or some convoy of gold going from it ; make for the nearest river (there was said to be a large one which ran northward thence), build canoes and try to reach the Northern Sea once more ; and then, if Heaven prospered them, they might seize a Spanish ship, and make their way home to England.

Amyas sat watching late that night, sad of heart. To give up the cherished dream of years was hard ; to face his mother, harder still : but it must be done, for the men's sake. So the new plan was proposed next day, and accepted joyfully. They would go up to the mountains, and rest awhile ; if possible, bring up the wounded whom they had left behind ; and then, try a new venture, with new hopes, perhaps new dangers.

They started next morning cheerfully enough, and for three hours or more paddled easily up the glassy and windless reaches, between two green flower-bespangled walls of forest, gay with innumerable birds and insects.

They paddled onward hour after hour, sheltering themselves as best they could under the shadow of the southern bank, while on their right hand the full sun-glare lay upon the enormous wall of mimosas, figs, and laurels, which formed the northern forest

broken by the slender shafts of bamboo tufts, and decked with a thousand gaudy parasites.

And as the sun rose higher and higher, a great stillness fell upon the forest. The jaguars and the monkeys had hidden themselves in the darkest depths of the woods. The birds' notes died out one by one ; the very butterflies ceased their flitting over the tree-tops, and slept with outspread wings upon the glossy leaves, undistinguishable from the flowers around them.

At last a soft and distant murmur, increasing gradually to a heavy roar, announced that they were nearing some cataract ; till turning a point, where the deep alluvial soil rose into a low cliff fringed with delicate ferns, they came full in sight of a scene at which all paused : not with astonishment, but with something very like disgust.

"Rapids again !" grumbled one. "I thought we had had enough of them on the Orinoco."

"We shall have to get out, and draw the canoes overland, I suppose. Three hours will be lost, and in the very hottest of the day, too."

"Stop grumbling, my masters, and don't cry out before you are hurt. Paddle right up to the largest of those islands, and let us look about us."

In front of them was a snow-white bar of raging foam, some ten feet high, along which were ranged three or four islands of black rock. Each was crested with a knot of lofty palms, whose green tops stood out clear against the bright sky, while the lower half of their stems loomed hazy through a luminous veil of rain-bowed mist.

"Silence all !" cried Amyas, for there was an empty canoe close at hand, "and paddle up thither and seize the canoe. If there be an Indian on the island, we will have speech of him : but mind and treat him friendly ; and on your lives, neither strike nor shoot, even if he offers to fight."

So, choosing a line of smooth backwater just in the wake of the island, they drove their canoes up by main force, and fastened them safely by the side of the Indian's, while Amyas, always the foremost, sprang boldly on shore, whispering to the Indian boy to follow him.

Once on the island, Amyas felt sure enough, that if its wild tenant had not seen them approach, he certainly had not heard them, so deafening was the noise which filled his brain, and seemed to make the very leaves upon the bushes quiver, and the solid stone beneath his feet to reel and ring.

He looked round anxiously for the expected Indian : but he

was nowhere to be seen ; and, meanwhile, he stepped cautiously along the island, which was some fifty yards in length and breadth. Suddenly, scrambling over the rocky flower-beds to the other side of the isle, he came upon a little shady beach, which, beneath a bank of stone some six feet high, fringed the edge of a perfectly still and glassy bay. In it the water swung slowly round and round in glassy dark-green rings, among which dimpled a hundred gaudy fish, waiting for every fly and worm which spun and quivered on the eddy. Here, if anywhere, was the place to find the owner of the canoe. He leapt down upon the pebbles ; and as he did so, a figure rose from behind a neighbouring rock, and met him face to face.

It was an Indian girl ; and yet, when he looked again—was it an Indian girl ? Amyas had seen hundreds of those delicate dark skinned daughters of the forest, but never such a one as this. Her stature was taller, her limbs were fuller and more rounded ; her complexion, though tanned by light, was fairer by far than his own sunburnt face ; her hair, crowned with a garland of white flowers, was not lank, and straight, and black, like an Indian's, but of a rich glossy brown, and curling richly and crisply from her very temples to her knees. Her forehead, though low, was upright and ample ; her nose was straight and small ; her lips, the lips of a European ; her whole face of the highest and richest type of Spanish beauty ; a collar of gold mingled with green beads hung round her neck, and golden bracelets were on her wrists. All the strange and dim legends of white Indians, and of nations of a higher race than Carib, or Arrowak, or Solimo, which Amyas had ever heard, rose up in his memory. She must be the daughter of some great cacique, perhaps of the lost Incas themselves—why not ? And full of simple wonder, he gazed upon that fairy vision : while she, unabashed in her free innocence, gazed fearlessly . . . return, as Eve might have done in Paradise, upon the mighty stature, and the strange garments, and above all, on the bushy beard and flowing yellow locks, of the Englishman.

He spoke first, in some Indian tongue, gently and smilingly, and made a half-step forward ; but quick as light she caught up from the ground a bow, and held it fiercely toward him, fitted with the long arrow, with which, as he could see, she had been striking fish, for a line of twisted grass hung from its barbed head. Amyas stopped, laid down his own bow and sword, and made another step in advance, smiling still, and making all Indian signs of amity : but the arrow was still pointed straight at his breast, and he knew the mettle and strength of the forest nymphs well enough, to stand still and call for the Indian boy ; too proud to retreat,

but in the uncomfortable expectation of feeling every moment the shaft quivering between his ribs.

The boy, who had been peering from above, leaped down to them in a moment ; and began, as the safest method, grovelling on his nose upon the pebbles, while he tried two or three dialects, one of which at last she seemed to understand, and answered in a tone of evident suspicion and anger.

"What does she say ?"

"That you are a Spaniard and a robber, because you have a beard."

"Tell her that we are no Spaniards, but that we hate them ; and are come across the great waters to help the Indians to kill them."

The boy translated his speech. The nymph answered by a contemptuous shake of the head.

"Tell her, that if she will send her tribe to us, we will do them no harm. We are going over the mountains to fight the Spaniards and we want them to show us the way."

The boy had no sooner spoken, than, nimble as a deer, the nymph had sprung up the rocks, and darted between the palm-stems to her canoe. Suddenly she caught sight of the English boat, and stopped with a cry of fear and rage.

"Let her pass !" shouted Amyas, who had followed her close. "Push your boat off, and let her pass. Boy, tell her to go on ; they will not come near her."

But she hesitated still, and with arrow drawn to the head, faced first on the boat's crew, and then on Amyas, till the Englishmen had shoved off full twenty yards.

Then, leaping into her tiny piragua, she darted into the wildest whirl of the eddies, shooting along with vigorous strokes, while the English trembled as they saw the frail bark spinning and leaping amid the muzzles of the alligators, and the huge dog-toothed trout : but with the swiftness of an arrow she reached the northern bank, drove her canoe among the bushes, and leaping from it, darted through some narrow opening in the bush, and vanished like a dream.

"What fair virago have you unearthed ?" cried Cary, as they toiled up again to the landing-place.

"Beshrew me," quoth Jack, "but we are in the very land of the nymphs, and I shall expect to see Diana herself next, with the moon on her forehead."

"Take care, then, where you wander hereabouts, Sir John : lest you end as Actaeon did, by turning into a stag, and being eaten by a jaguar."

"Actaeon was eaten by his own hounds, Mr. Cary, so the parallel don't hold. But surely she was a very wonder of beauty!"

Why was it that Amyas did not like this harmless talk? There had come over him the strangest new feeling; as if that fair vision was his property, and the men had no right to talk about her, no right to have even seen her. And he spoke quite surlyly as he said—

"You may leave the women to themselves, my masters; you'll have to deal with the men ere long: so get your canoes up on the rock, and keep good watch."

"Hillo!" shouted one in a few minutes, "here's fresh fish enough to feed us all round. I suppose that young cat-a-mountain left it behind her in her hurry. I wish she had left her golden chains and ouches into the bargain."

"Well," said another, "we'll take it as fair payment, for having made us drop down the current again to let her ladyship pass."

"Leave that fish alone," said Amyas, "it is none of yours."

"Why, Sir!" quoth the finder, in a tone of sulky deprecation.

"If we are to make good friends with the heathens, we had better not begin by stealing their goods. There are plenty more fish in the river; go and catch them, and let the Indians have their own."

The men were accustomed enough to strict and stern justice in their dealings with the savages: but they could not help looking slyly at each other, and hinting, when out of sight, that the Captain seemed in a mighty fuss about his new acquaintance.

However, they were expert by this time in all the Indians' fishing methods; and so abundant was the aquatic life which swarmed around every rock, that in an hour fish enough lay on the beach to feed them all.

A full hour passed before they saw anything more of their Indian neighbours; and then from under the bushes shot out a canoe, on which all eyes were fixed in expectation.

Amyas, who expected to find there some remnant of a higher race, was disappointed enough at seeing on board only the usual half-dozen of low-browed, dirty Orsons, painted red with arnotto; but a grey-headed elder at the stern seemed, by his feathers and gold ornaments, to be some man of note in the little woodland community.

The canoe came close up to the island; Amyas saw that they were unarmed, and, laying down his weapons, advanced alone to the bank, making all signs of amity. They were returned with interest by the old man, and Amyas's next care was to bring forward the fish which the fair nymph had left behind, and, through the

medium of the Indian lad, to give the cacique (for so he seemed to be), to understand that he wished to render every one his own. This offer was received, as Amyas expected, with great applause, and the canoe came alongside ; but the crew still seemed afraid to land. Amyas bade his men throw the fish one by one into the boat, and then proclaimed by the boy's mouth, as was his custom with all Indians, that he and his were enemies of the Spaniards, and on their way to make war against them,—and that all which they desired was a peaceable and safe passage through the dominions of the mighty potentate and renowned warrior whom they beheld before them ; for Amyas argued rightly enough that even if the old fellow aft was not the cacique, he would be none the less pleased at being mistaken for him.

Whereon the ancient worthy, rising in the canoe, pointed to heaven, earth, and the things under, and commenced a long sermon, in tone, manner, and articulation, very like one of those which the great black-bearded apes were in the habit of preaching every evening when they could get together a congregation of little monkeys to listen, to the great scandal of Jack, who would have it that some evil spirit set them on to mimic him ; which sermon, being partly interpreted by the Indian lad, seemed to signify, that the valour and justice of the white men had already reached the ears of the speaker, and that he was sent to welcome them into those regions by the Daughter of the Sun.

“ The Daughter of the Sun ! ” quoth Amyas ; “ then we have found the lost Incas after all.”

“ We have found something,” said Cary ; “ I only hope it may not be a mare's nest, like many another of our finding.”

“ Or an adder's,” said Yeo. “ We must beware of treachery.”

“ We must beware of no such thing,” said Amyas, pretty sharply. “ Have I not told you fifty times, that if they see that we trust them, they will trust us, and if they see that we suspect them, they will suspect us ? And when two parties are watching to see who strikes the first blow, they are sure to come to fisty-cuffs from mere dirty fear of each other.”

Amyas spoke truth ; for almost every atrocity against savages which had been committed by the Spaniards was wont to be excused in that same base fear of treachery. Amyas's plan, like that of Drake, and Cook, and all great English voyagers, had been all along to inspire at once awe and confidence, by a frank and fearless carriage ; and he was not disappointed here. He bade the men step boldly into their canoes, and follow the old Indian whither he would. The simple children of the forest bowed themselves reverently before the mighty strangers, and then led

them smilingly across the stream, and through a narrow passage in the covert, to a hidden lagoon, on the banks of which stood, not Manoa, but a tiny Indian village.

CHAPTER XX

HOW AMYAS WAS TEMPTED OF THE DEVIL

OUR voyagers beheld on landing a scattered village of palm-leaf sheds, under which, as usual, the hammocks were slung from tree to tree. Here and there, in openings in the forest, patches of cassava and indigo appeared ; and there was a look of neatness and comfort about the little settlement superior to the average.

But now for the signs of the evil spirit. On either side of the landing-place were arranged four or five stout fellows, each with a tall drum, or long earthen trumpet, swelling out in the course of its length into several hollow balls, from which arose, the moment the strangers set foot on shore, so deafening a cacophony of howls, and groans, and thumps, as fully to justify Yeo's remark, " They are calling upon their devil, Sir."

" And you mark, Sirs," said Yeo, " there's some feast or sacrifice toward. I'm not over-confident of them yet."

" Nonsense ! " said Amyas, " we could kill every soul of them in half an hour, and they know that as well as me."

But some great demonstration was plainly toward : for the children of the forest were arrayed in two lines right and left of the open space, the men in front, and the women behind ; and all bedizened with arnotto, indigo, and feathers.

Next, with a hideous yell, leapt into the centre of the space a personage who certainly could not have complained if any one had taken him for the devil, for he had dressed himself up carefully for that very intent in a jaguar-skin with a long tail, grinning teeth, a pair of horns, a plume of black and yellow feathers, and a huge rattle.

" Here's the Piache, the rascal," says Amyas.

" Ay," says Yeo, " in Satan's livery, and I've no doubt his works are according, trust him for it."

" Don't be frightened, Jack," says Cary, backing up Brimblecombe from behind. " It's your business to tackle him, you know. At him boldly, and he'll run."

Whereat all the men laughed ; and the Piache, who had intended to produce a very solemn impression, hung fire a little. However, being accustomed to get his bread by his impudence, he soon

recovered himself, advanced, smote one of the musicians over the head with his rattle to procure silence ; and then began a harangue, to which Amyas listened patiently, cigar in mouth :

“ What’s it all about, boy ? ”

“ He wants to know whether you have seen Amalivaca, on the other shore of the great water ? ”

Amyas was accustomed to this inquiry after the mythic civilizer of the forest Indians, who after carving the mysterious sculptures which appear upon so many inland cliffs of that region, returned again whence he came, beyond the ocean. He answered, as usual, by setting forth the praises of Queen Elizabeth.

To which the Piache replied, that she must be one of Amalivaca’s seven daughters, some of whom he took back with him, while he broke the legs of the rest to prevent their running away, and left them to people the forests.

To which Amyas replied, that his Queen’s legs were certainly not broken : for she was a very model of grace and activity, and the best dancer in all her dominions : but that it was more important to him to know whether the tribe would give them cassava bread, and let them stay peaceably on that island, to rest awhile before they went on to fight the clothed men (the Spaniards), on the other side of the mountains.

On which the Piache, after capering and turning head over heels with much howling, beckoned Amyas and his party to follow him ; they did so, seeing that the Indians were all unarmed, and evidently in the highest good humour.

The Piache went toward the door of a carefully closed hut, and crawling up to it on all-fours in most abject fashion, began whining to some one within.

“ Ask what he is about, boy.”

The lad asked the old Cacique, who had accompanied them ; and received for answer, that he was consulting the Daughter of the Sun.

“ Here is our mare’s nest at last,” quoth Cary, as the Piache from whines rose to screams and gesticulations, and then to violent convulsions, foaming at the mouth, and rolling of the eyeballs, till he suddenly sank exhausted, and lay for dead.

“ As good as a stage-play.”

“ The Devil has played his part,” says Jack ; “ and now by the rules of all plays Vice should come on.”

“ And a very fair Vice it will be, I suspect ; a right sweet Iniquity, my Jack ! Listen.”

And from the interior of the hut rose a low sweet song, at which all the simple Indians bowed their heads in reverence ; and the

English were hushed in astonishment ; for the voice was not shrill or guttural, like that of an Indian, but round, clear, and rich, like a European's ; and as it swelled and rose louder and louder, showed a compass and power which would have been extraordinary anywhere. At last one triumphant burst, so shrill that all ears rang again, and then dead silence. The Piache, suddenly restored to life, jumped upright, and recommenced preaching at Amyas.

" Tell the howling villain to make short work of it, lad ! His tune won't do after that last one."

The lad, grinning, informed Amyas, that the Piache signified their acceptance as friends by the Daughter of the Sun ; that her friends were theirs, and her foes theirs. Whereon the Indians set up a scream of delight, and Amyas, rolling another tobacco-leaf up in another strip of plaintain, answered,—

" Then let her give us some cassava," and lighted a fresh cigar.

Whereon the door of the hut opened, and the Indians prostrated themselves to the earth, as there came forth the same fair apparition which they had encountered upon the island, but decked now in feather-robcs, and plumes of every imaginable hue.

Slowly and stately, as one accustomed to command, she walked up to Amyas, glancing proudly round on her prostrate adorers, and pointing with graceful arms to the trees, the gardens and the huts, gave him to understand by signs (so expressive were her looks, that no words were needed) that all was at his service ; after which, taking his hand, she lifted it gently to her forehead.

At that sign of submission a shout of rapture rose from the crowd ; and as the mysterious maiden retired again to her hut, they pressed round the English, caressing and admiring, pointing with equal surprise to their swords, to their Indian bows and blow-guns, and to the trophies of wild beasts with which they were clothed ; while women hastened off to bring fruit, and flowers and cassava, and (to Amyas's great anxiety) calabashes of intoxicating drink ; and, to make a long story short, the English sat down beneath the trees, and feasted merrily, while the drums and trumpets made hideous music, and lithe young girls and lads danced uncouth dances, which so scandalized both Brimblecombe and Yeo, that they persuaded Amyas to beat an early retreat. He was willing enough to get back to the island while the men were still sober ; so there were many leave-takings and promises of return on the morrow, and the party paddled back to their island-fortress, racking their wits as to who or what the mysterious maid could be.

They all assembled for the evening service (hardly a day had

passed since they left England on which they had not done the same) ; and after it was over, they must needs sing a Psalm, and then a catch or two, ere they went to sleep ; and till the moon was high in heaven, twenty mellow voices rang out above the roar of the cataract, in many a good old tune. Once or twice they thought they heard an echo to their song ; but they took no note of it, till Cary, who had gone apart for a few minutes, returned, and whispered Amyas away.

“ The sweet Iniquity is mimicking us, lad.”

They went to the brink of the river ; and there (for their ears were by this time dead to the noise of the torrent) they could hear plainly the same voice which had so surprised them in the hut, repeating, clear and true, snatches of the airs which they had sung. Strange and solemn enough was the effect of the men’s deep voices on the island, answered out of the dark forest by those sweet treble notes ; and the two young men stood a long while listening and looking out across the eddies, which swirled down golden in the moonlight : but they could see nothing beyond save the black wall of trees. After a while the voice ceased, and the two returned to dream of Incas and nightingales.

They visited the village again next day ; and every day for a week or more ; but the maiden appeared but rarely, and when she did, kept her distance as haughtily as a queen.

Amyas, of course, as soon as he could converse somewhat better with his new friends, was not long before he questioned the Cacique about her. But the old man made an owl’s face at her name, and intimated by mysterious shakes of the head, that she was a very strange personage, and the less said about her the better. She was “ a child of the Sun,” and that was enough.

“ Tell him, boy,” quoth Cary, “ that we are the children of the Sun by his first wife ; and have orders from him to inquire how the Indians have behaved to our step-sister, for he cannot see all their tricks down here, the trees are so thick. So let him tell us, or all the cassava plants shall be blighted.”

“ Will, Will, don’t play with lying !” said Amyas : but the threat was enough for the Cacique, and taking them in his canoe a full mile down the stream, as if in fear that the wonderful maiden should overhear him, he told them, in a sort of rhythmic chant, how, many moons ago (he could not tell how many), his tribe was a mighty nation, and dwelt in Papamene, till the Spaniards drove them forth. And how, as they wandered northward, far away upon the mountain spurs beneath the flaming cone of Cotopaxi, they had found this fair creature wandering in the forest, about the stature of a seven years’ child. Wondering at her white skin and

her delicate beauty, the simple Indians worshipped her as a god, and led her home with them. And when they found that she was human like themselves, their wonder scarcely lessened. How could so tender a being have sustained life in those forests, and escaped the jaguar and the snake? She must be under some Divine protection : she must be a daughter of the Sun, one of that mighty Inca race.

So, as the girl grew up among them, she was tended with royal honours, by command of the conjurer of the tribe, that so her forefather the Sun might be propitious to them. And as she grew, she had become, it seemed, somewhat of a prophetess among them, as well as an object of fétish-worship ; for she was more prudent in council, valiant in war, and cunning in the chase, than all the elders of the tribe ; and those strange and sweet songs of hers, which had so surprised the white men, were full of mysterious wisdom about the birds, and the animals, and the flowers, and the rivers, which the Sun and the Good Spirit taught her from above. So she had lived among them, unmarried still not only because she despised the addresses of all Indian youths, but because the conjurer had declared it to be profane in them to mingle with the race of the Sun, and had assigned her a cabin near his own, where she was served in state, and gave some sort of oracular responses, as they had seen, to the questions which he put to her.

Such was the Cacique's tale : on which Cary remarked, probably not unjustly, that he "dared to say the conjurer made a very good thing of it."

So they paddled back, while the simple Cacique entreated them to tell the Sun, in their daily prayers, how well the wild people had treated his descendant ; and besought them not to take her away with them, lest the Sun should forget the poor Omaguas, and ripen their manioc and their fruit no more.

Amyas had no wish to stay where he was, longer than was absolutely necessary to bring up the sick men from the Orinoco ; but this, he well knew, would be a journey probably of some months, and attended with much danger.

Cary volunteered at once, however, to undertake the adventure, if half-a-dozen men would join him, and the Indians would send a few young men to help in working the canoe.

Whether it was pride or shyness which kept the maiden aloof, she conquered it after a while ; perhaps through mere woman's curiosity ; and perhaps, too, from mere longing for amusement in a place so unspeakably stupid as the forest. She gave the English to understand, however, that though they all

might be very important personages, none of them was to be her companion but Amyas. And ere a month was past, she was often hunting with him far and wide in the neighbouring forest, with a train of chosen nymphs, whom she had persuaded to follow her example and spurn the dusky suitors around.

So a harmless friendship sprang up between Amyas and the girl, which soon turned to good account. For she no sooner heard that he needed a crew of Indians, than she consulted the Piache, assembled the tribe, and having retired to her hut, commenced a song, which (unless the Piache lied) was a command to furnish young men for Cary's expedition, under penalty of the sovereign displeasure of an evil spirit with an unpronounceable name—an argument which succeeded on the spot, and the canoe departed on its perilous errand.

John Brimblecombe had great doubts whether a venture thus started by direct help and patronage of the fiend would succeed ; and Amyas himself, disliking the humbug, told Ayacanora that it would be better to have told the tribe that it was a good deed, and pleasing to the Good Spirit.

" Ah ! " said she, naïvely enough, " they know better than that. The Good Spirit is big and lazy ; and he smiles, and takes no trouble : but the little bad spirit, he is so busy—here, and there, and everywhere."

Jack preached to the tribe, but not with much success. For the conjurer, though his main treasure was gone over to the camp of the enemy, had a certain holy trumpet, which was hidden mysteriously in a cave on the neighbouring hills ; and it was well known, that unless that trumpet, after fastings, flagellations, and other solemn rites, was blown by night throughout the woods, the palm-trees would bear no fruit ; yea, so great was the fame of that trumpet, that neighbouring tribes sent at the proper season to hire it and the blow thereof, by payment of much precious trumpery, that so they might be sharers in its fertilizing powers.

So the Piache announced one day in public, that in consequence of the impiety of the Omaguas, he should retire to a neighbouring tribe, of more religious turn of mind ; and taking with him the precious instrument, leave their palms to blight, and themselves to the evil spirit.

Dire was the wailing, and dire the wrath, throughout the village. Jack's words were allowed to be good words ; but what was the Gospel in comparison of the trumpet ? The rascal saw his advantage, and began a fierce harangue against the heretic strangers. As he maddened, his hearers maddened ; the savage nature, capricious as a child's, flashed out in wild suspicion.

Women yelled, men scowled, and ran hastily to their huts for bows and blow-guns. The case was grown critical. There were not more than a dozen men with Amyas at the time, and they had only their swords, while the Indian men might muster nearly a hundred. Amyas forbade his men either to draw or to retreat ; but poisoned arrows were weapons before which the boldest might well quail ; and more than one cheek grew pale, which had seldom been pale before.

"It is God's quarrel, Sirs, all," said Jack Brimblecombe ; "let Him defend the right."

As he spoke, from Ayacanora's hut arose her magic song, and quivered aloft among the green heights of the forest.

The mob stood spell-bound, still growling fiercely, but not daring to move. Another moment, and she had rushed out, like a very Diana, into the centre of the ring, bow in hand, and arrow on the string.

The fallen "children of wrath" had found their match in her ; for her beautiful face was convulsed with fury. Almost foaming in her passion, she burst forth with bitter revilings ; she pointed with admiration to the English, and then with fiercest contempt to the Indians ; and at last, with fierce gestures, seemed to cast off the very dust of her feet against them, and springing to Amyas's side, placed herself in the forefront of the English battle.

The whole scene was so sudden, that Amyas had hardly discovered whether she came as friend or foe, before her bow was raised. He had just time to strike up her hand, when the arrow flew past the ear of the offending Piache, and stuck quivering in a tree.

"Let me kill the wretch !" said she, stamping with rage ; but Amyas held her arm firmly.

"Fools !" cried she to the tribe, while tears of anger rolled down her cheeks. "Choose between me and your trumpet ! I am a daughter of the Sun ; I am white ; I am a companion for Englishmen ! But you ! your mothers were Guahibas, and ate mud ; and your fathers—they were howling apes ! Let them sing to you ! I shall go to the white men, and never sing you to sleep any more ; and when the little evil spirit misses my voice, he will come and tumble you out of your hammocks, and make you dream of ghosts every night, till you grow as thin as blow-guns, and as stupid as two-toed sloths."

This terrible counter-threat, in spite of the slight bathos involved, had its effect ; for it appealed to that dread of the sleep world which is common to all savages : but the conjurer was ready to outbid the prophetess, and had begun a fresh oration, when Amyas turned the tide of war. Bursting into a huge laugh at the whole

matter, he took the conjurer by his shoulders, sent him with one crafty kick half-a-dozen yards off upon his nose ; and then, walking out of the ranks, shook hands round with all his Indian acquaintances.

Whereon, like grown-up babies, they all burst out laughing too, shook hands with all the English, and then with each other. The Piache relented, like a prudent man ; Ayacanora returned to her hut to sulk ; and Amyas to his island, to long for Cary's return, for he felt himself on dangerous ground.

At last Will returned, safe and sound, and as merry as ever, not having lost a man (though he had had a smart brush with the Guahibas). He brought back three of the wounded men, now pretty nigh cured ; the other two, who had lost a leg apiece, had refused to come. They had Indian wives ; more than they could eat ; and tobacco without end : and if it were not for the gnats (of which Cary said that there were more mosquitos than there was air), they should be the happiest men alive. Amyas could hardly blame the poor fellows ; for the chance of their getting home through the forest with one leg each was very small, and, after all, they were making the best of a bad matter.

While he was on a hunting party, two of his men were missing, and were not heard of for some days : at the end of which time the old Cacique came to tell him that he believed they had taken to the forest, each with an Indian girl. Amyas was very wroth at the news. First, because it had never happened before : he could say with honest pride, as Raleigh did afterwards when he returned from his Guiana voyage, that no Indian woman had ever been the worse for any man of his.

Moreover, he dreaded offence to the Indians themselves : but on this score the Cacique soon comforted him, telling him that the girls, as far as he could find, had gone off of their own free will ; intimating that he thought it somewhat an honour to the tribe that they had found favour in the eyes of the bearded men ; and moreover, that late wars had so thinned the ranks of their men, that they were glad enough to find husbands for their maidens, and had been driven of late years to kill many of their female infants. This sad story, common perhaps to every American tribe, and one of the chief causes of their extermination, reassured Amyas somewhat : but he could not stomach either the loss of his men, or their breach of discipline ; and look for them he would. Did any one know where they were ? If the tribe knew, they did not care to tell : but Ayacanora, the moment she found out his wishes, vanished into the forest, and returned in two days, saying that she had found the fugitives ; but she would not

show him where they were, unless he promised not to kill them. He, of course, had no mind for so rigorous a method : he both needed the men, and he had no malice against them,—for the one, Ebsworthy, was a plain, honest, happy-go-lucky sailor ; and the other was that ne'er-do-weel Will Parracombe, his old school-fellow.

So forth Amyas went, with Ayacanora as a guide, some five miles upward along the forest slopes, till the girl whispered, " There they are ;" and Amyas, pushing himself gently through a thicket of bamboo, beheld a scene which, in spite of his wrath, kept him silent, and perhaps softened, for a minute.

On the further side of a little lawn, amidst glorious surroundings, lay the two men whom Amyas sought, and whom, now he had found them, he had hardly heart to wake from their delicious dream.

There, on the stream bank, lay the two renegades from civilized life. They had cast away their clothes, and painted themselves, like the Indians, with arnotto and indigo.

Somewhat apart crouched their two dusky brides, crowned with fragrant flowers, but working busily, like true women, for the lords whom they delighted to honour. One sat plaiting palm fibres into a basket ; the other was boring the stem of a huge milk-tree, which rose like some mighty column on the right hand of the lawn.

The women saw him, and springing to their feet, caught up their long pocunas, and leapt like deer each in front of her beloved. There they stood, the deadly tubes pressed to their lips, eyeing him like tigresses who protect their young, while every slender limb quivered, not with terror, but with rage.

Amyas paused, half in admiration, half in prudence ; for one rash step was death. But rushing through the canes, Ayacanora sprang to the front, and shrieked to them in Indian. At the sight of the prophetess the women wavered, and Amyas, putting on as gentle a face as he could, stepped forward, assuring them in his best Indian that he would harm no one.

" Ebsworthy ! Parracombe ! Are you grown such savages already, that you have forgotten your captain ? Stand up, men, and salute !"

Ebsworthy sprang to his feet, obeyed mechanically, and then slipped behind his bride again, as if in shame. The dreamer turned his head languidly, raised his hand to his forehead, and then returned to his contemplation.

Ebsworthy broke the silence, half reproachfully, half trying to bluster away the coming storm.

"Well, noble Captain, so you've hunted out us poor fellows ; and want to drag us back again in a halter, I suppose ?"

"I came to look for Christians, and I find heathens. Parracombe !"

"He's too happy to answer you, Sir. And why not ? What do you want of us ? Our two years' vow is out, and we are free men now."

"You are the Queen's servants still, and in her name I charge you—"

"Free to be happy," interrupted the man. "With the best of wives, the best of food, a warmer bed than a duke's, and a finer garden than an emperor's. As for clothes, why the plague should a man wear them where he don't need them ? As for gold, what's the use of it where Heaven sends everything ready-made to your hands ? Hearken, Captain Leigh. You've been a good captain to me, and I'll repay you with a bit of sound advice. Give up your gold-hunting, and toiling and moiling after honour and glory, and copy us. Take that fair maid behind you there to wife ; pitch here with us ; and see if you are not happier in one day than ever you were in all your life before."

"You are drunk, Sirrah ! William Parracombe ! Will you speak to me, or shall I heave you into the stream to sober you ?"

"Who calls William Parracombe ?" answered a sleepy voice.

"I, fool !—your captain."

"I am not William Parracombe. He is dead long ago of hunger, and labour, and heavy sorrow, and will never see Bideford town any more. He is turned into an Indian now ; and he is to sleep, sleep, sleep for a hundred years, till he gets his strength again, poor fellow—"

His eye glanced upon Ayacanora. The two girls were whispering to her smilingly. He saw one of them glance a look toward him, and then say something, which raised a beautiful blush in the maiden's face. With a playful blow at the speaker, she turned away. Amyas knew instinctively what advice the girl was giving her. Oh, how beautiful she was ! Might not the renegades have some reason on their side after all ?

He shuddered at the thought : but he could not shake it off. It glided in like some gaudy snake, and wreathed its coils round all his heart and brain. He drew back to the other side of the lawn ; and thought and thought—

Should he ever get home ? If he did, might he not get home a beggar ? Beggar or rich, he would still have to face his mother, to go through that meeting, to tell that tale, perhaps, to hear those reproaches, the forecast of which had weighed on him like a dark

thunder-cloud for two weary years ; to wipe out which by some desperate deed of glory he had wandered the wilderness, and wandered in vain.

Could he not settle here ? He need not be a savage. He and his might Christianise, civilize, teach equal law, mercy in war, chivalry to women, found a community which might be hereafter as strong a barrier against the encroachments of the Spaniard, as Manoa itself would have been. Who knew the wealth of the surrounding forests ? Even if there were no gold, there were boundless vegetable treasures. What might he not export down the rivers ? This might be the nucleus of a great commercial settlement—

And yet, was even that worth while ? To settle here only to torment his soul with fresh schemes, fresh ambitions ; not to rest, but only to change one labour for another ? Was not your dreamer right ? Did they not all need rest ? What if they each sat down among the flowers, beside an Indian bride ? They might live like Christians, while they lived like the birds of heaven.

What a dead silence ! Was it an omen ? He looked up hastily at Ayacanora. She was watching him earnestly. Heavens ! was she waiting for his decision ? Both dropped their eyes. The decision was not to come from them.

A rustle ! a roar ! a shriek ! and Amyas lifted his eyes in time to see a huge dark bar shoot from the crag above the dreamer's head, among the group of girls.

A dull crash, as the group flew asunder ; and in the midst, upon the ground, the tawny limbs of one were writhing beneath the fangs of a black jaguar, the rarest and most terrible of the forest kings. Of one ? But of which ? Was it Ayacanora ? And sword in hand, Amyas rushed madly forward : before he reached the spot those tortured limbs were still.

It was not Ayacanora ; for with a shriek which rang through the woods, the wretched dreamer, wakened thus at last, sprang up and felt for his sword. Fool ! he had left it in his hammock ! Screaming the name of his dead bride, he rushed on the jaguar, as it crouched above its prey, and seizing its head with teeth and nails, worried it, in the ferocity of his madness, like a mastiff-dog.

The brute wrenched its head from his grasp, and raised its dreadful paw. Another moment, and the husband's corpse would have lain by the wife's.

But high in air gleamed Amyas's blade ; down, with all the weight of his huge body and strong arm, fell that most trusty steel ; the head of the jaguar dropped grinning on its victim's corpse.

“ Oh Lord Jesus,” said Amyas to himself, “ thou hast answered the devil for me ! And this is the selfish rest for which I would have bartered the rest which comes by working where thou hast put me ! ”

They bore away the lithe corpse into the forest, and buried it under soft moss and virgin mould ; and so the fair clay was transfigured into fairer flowers, and the poor gentle untaught spirit returned to God who gave it.

And then Amyas went sadly and silently back again, and Parracombe walked after him, like one who walks in sleep.

Ebsworthy, sobered by the shock, entreated to come too : but Amyas forbade him gently,—

“ No, lad, you are forgiven. God forbid that I should judge you or any man ! Sir John shall come up and marry you ; and then, if it still be your will to stay, the Lord forgive you, if you be wrong ; in the meanwhile, we will leave with you all that we can spare. Stay here, and pray to God to make you, and me too, wiser men.”

And so Amyas departed. He had come out stern and proud ; but he came back again like a little child.

Three days after, Parracombe was dead. Once in camp, he seemed unable to eat or move, and having received absolution and communion from good Sir John, faded away without disease or pain, “ babbling of green fields,” and murmuring the name of his lost Indian bride.

Amyas, too, sought ghostly counsel of Sir John, and told him all which had passed through his mind.

The next day he announced his intention to march once more ; and to his delight found the men ready enough to move towards the Spanish settlements. One thing they needed : gunpowder for their muskets. But that they must make as they went along ; that is, if they could get the materials.

One thing remained ; to invite their Indian friends to join them. And that was done in due form the next day.

Ayacanora was consulted, of course. The maiden sang most melodious assent ; the whole tribe echoed it ; and all went smoothly enough, till the old Cacique observed, that, before starting, a compact should be made between the allies, as to their share of the booty.

Nothing could be more reasonable ; and Amyas asked him to name his terms.

“ You take the gold, and we will take the prisoners.”

“ And what will you do with them ? ” asked Amyas, who recollected poor John Oxenham’s hapless compact made in like case.

"Eat them," quoth the Cacique, innocently enough.

Amyas whistled.

"Humph!" said Cary. "The old proverb comes true—the more the merrier: but the fewer the better fare." I think we will do without our red friends for this time."

Ayaconora, who had been preaching war like a very Boadicea, was much vexed.

"Do you too want to dine off roast Spaniards?" asked Amyas.

She shook her head, and denied the imputation with much disgust.

Amyas was relieved; he had shrunk from joining the thought of so fair a creature, however degraded, with the horrors of cannibalism.

But the Cacique was a man of business, and held out staunchly.

"Is it fair?" he asked. "The white man loves gold; and he gets it. The poor Indian, what use is gold to him? He only wants something to eat, and he must eat his enemies. What else will pay him for going so far through the forests hungry and thirsty? You will get all, and the Omaguas will get nothing."

The argument was unanswerable; and the next day they started without the Indians, while John Brimblecombe heaved many an honest sigh at leaving them to darkness, the devil, and the holy trumpet.

And Ayacanora?

When their departure was determined, she shut herself up in her hut, and appeared no more.

CHAPTER XXI

HOW THEY TOOK THE GOLD-TRAIN

A FORTNIGHT or more has passed in severe toil: but not more severe than they have endured many a time before. Bidding farewell once and for ever to the green ocean of the eastern plains, they have crossed the Cordillera; they have taken a longing glance at the city of Santa Fé, lying in the midst of rich gardens on its lofty mountain plateau, and have seen, as was to be expected, that it was far too large a place for any attempt of theirs. But they have not altogether thrown away their time. Their Indian lad has discovered that a gold-train is going down from Santa Fé toward the Magdalena; and they are waiting for it beside the miserable rut which serves for a road, encamped in a forest of oaks

which might make them almost fancy themselves back again in Europe.

They have pitched their camp among the tree-ferns, above a spot where the path winds along a steep hill-side, with a sheer cliff below of many a hundred feet. There was a road there once, perhaps, when Cundinamarca was a civilized and cultivated kingdom ; but all which Spanish misrule has left of it are a few steps slipping from their places at the bottom of a narrow ditch of mud.

And now, the rapid tropic vegetation has reclaimed its old domains, and Amyas and his crew are as utterly alone, within a few miles of an important Spanish settlement, as they would be in the solitudes of the Orinoco or the Amazon.

So, having blocked up the road above by felling a large tree across it, they sit there among the flowers chewing coca, in default of food and drink.

At last, up from beneath there was a sharp crack and a loud cry. The crack was neither the snapping of a branch, nor the tapping of a woodpecker.

"That was a whip's crack," said Yeo, "and a woman's wail. They are close here, lads !"

"A woman's ? Do they drive women in their gangs ?" asked Amyas.

"Why not, the brutes ? There they are, Sir."

Up they came, slowly, and all hearts beat loud at their coming.

First, about twenty soldiers, only one-half of whom were on foot ; the other half being borne, incredible as it may seem, each in a chair on the back of a single Indian.

A sad and hideous sight it was : yet one too common even then in those remoter districts, where the humane edicts were disregarded. A line of Indians, Negroes, and Zambos, naked, emaciated, scarred with whips and fetters, and chained together by their left wrists, toiled upwards, panting and perspiring under the burden of a basket held up by a strap which passed across their foreheads. There were not only old men and youths among them, but women ; slender young girls, mothers with children running at their knee ; and, at the sight, a low murmur of indignation rose from the ambushed Englishmen, worthy of the free and righteous hearts of those days.

But the first forty, so Amyas counted, bore on their backs a burden which made all, perhaps, but him and Yeo, forget even the wretches who bore it. Each basket contained a square package of carefully corded hide ; the look whereof friend Amyas knew full well.

"What's in they, Captain?"

"Gold!" And at that magic word all eyes were strained greedily forward, and such a rustle followed, that Amyas, in the very face of detection, had to whisper—

"Be men, be men, or you will spoil all yet!"

The last twenty, or so, of the Indians bore larger baskets, but more lightly freighted, seemingly with manioc, and maize-bread, and other food for the party; and after them came, with their bearers and attendants, just twenty soldiers more, followed by the officer in charge, who smiled away in his chair, and twirled two huge mustachios, thinking of nothing less than of the English arrows which were itching to be away and through his ribs. The ambush was complete; the only question, how and when to begin?

Amyas had a shrinking, which all will understand, from drawing bow in cool blood on men so utterly unsuspecting and defenceless, even though in the very act of devilish cruelty—for devilish cruelty it was, as three or four drivers armed with whips, lingered up and down the slowly-staggering file of Indians, and avenged every moment's lagging, even every stumble, by a blow of the cruel manati-hide, which cracked like a pistol-shot against the naked limbs of the silent and uncomplaining victim.

Suddenly the *casus belli*, as usually happens, arose of its own accord.

The last but one of the chained line was an old grey-headed man, followed by a slender graceful girl of some eighteen years old, and Amyas's heart yearned over them as they came up. Just as they passed, the foremost of the file had rounded the corner above; there was a bustle, and a voice shouted, "Halt, Señors! there is a tree across the path!"

"A tree across the path?" bellowed the officer, with a variety of passionate addresses to the Mother of Heaven, the fiends of hell, and various other personages; while the line of trembling Indians, told to halt above, and driven on by blows below, surged up and down upon the ruinous steps of the Indian road, until the poor old man fell grovelling on his face.

The officer leaped down, and hurried upward to see what had happened. Of course, he came across the old man.

"Sin peccado concebida! Grandfather of Beelzebub, is this a place to lie worshipping your fiends?" and he pricked the prostrate wretch with the point of his sword.

The old man tried to rise: but the weight on his head was too much for him; he fell again, and lay motionless.

The driver applied the manati-hide across his loins, once, twice with fearful force; but even that specific was useless.

"Gastado, Señor Capitan," said he, with a shrug. "Used up. Ho has been failing these three months !"

"What does the Intendant mean, by sending me out with worn-out cattle like these ? Forward there !" shouted he. "Clear away the tree, Señors, and I'll soon clear the chain. Hold it up, Pedrillo !"

The driver held up the chain, which was fastened to the old man's wrist. The officer stepped back, and flourished round his head a Toledo blade, whose beauty made Amyas break the Tenth Commandment on the spot.

The man was a tall, handsome, broad-shouldered, high-bred man ; and Amyas thought that he was going to display the strength of his arm, and the temper of his blade, in severing the chain at one stroke.

The blade gleamed in the air, once, twice, and fell : not on the chain, but on the wrist which it fettered. There was a shriek—a crimson flash—and the chain and its prisoner were parted indeed.

One moment more, and Amyas's arrow would have been through the throat of the murderer, who paused, regarding his workmanship with a satisfied smile ; but vengeance was not to come from him.

Quick and fierce as a tiger-cat, the girl sprang on the ruffian, and with the intense strength of passion, clasped him in her arms, and leaped with him from the narrow ledge into the abyss below.

There was a rush, a shout ; all faces were bent over the precipice. The girl hung by her chained wrist : the officer was gone. There was a moment's awful silence ; and then Amyas heard his body crashing through the tree-tops far below.

"Haul her up ! Hew her in pieces ! Burn the witch !" and the driver seizing the chain, pulled at it with all his might, while all springing from their chairs, stooped over the brink.

Now was the time for Amyas ! Heaven had delivered them into his hands. Swift and sure, at ten yards off, his arrow rushed through the body of the driver, and then, with a roar as of the leaping lion, he sprang like an avenging angel into the midst of the astonished ruffians.

The men of Devon had followed their captain's lead ; a storm of arrows left five Spaniards dead, and a dozen more wounded, and down leapt Salvation Yeo, his white hair streaming behind him, with twenty good swords more, and the work of death began.

The Spaniards fought like lions ; but they had no time to fix their arquebuses on the crutches ; no room, in that narrow path, to use their pikes. The English had the wall of them ; and to have the wall there, was to have the foe's life at their mercy.

Five desperate minutes, and not a living Spaniard stood upon those steps ; and certainly no living one lay in the green abyss below.

“ Now, then ! Loose the Indians ! ”

They found armourers’ tools on one of the dead bodies, and it was done.

“ We are your friends,” said Amyas. “ All we ask is, that you shall help us to carry this gold down to the Magdalena, and then you are free.”

Some few of the younger grovelled at his knees, and kissed his feet, hailing him as the child of the Sun : but the most part kept a stolid indifference, and when freed from their fetters, sat quietly down where they stood, staring into vacancy. The iron had entered too deeply into their soul. They seemed past hope, enjoyment, even understanding.

But the young girl, who was last of all in the line, as soon as she was loosed, sprang to her father’s body, speaking no word, lifted it in her thin arms, laid it across her knees, kissed the fallen lips, stroked the furrowed cheeks, murmured inarticulate sounds like the cooing of a woodland dove, of which none knew the meaning but she, and he who heard not, for his soul had long since fled. Suddenly the truth flashed on her ; silent as ever, she drew one long heaving breath, and rose erect, the body in her arms.

Another moment, and she had leaped into the abyss.

They watched her dark and slender limbs, twined closely round the old man’s corpse, turn over, and over, and over, till a crash among the leaves, and a scream among the birds, told that she had reached the trees ; and the green roof hid her from their view.

“ Brave lass ! ” shouted a sailor.

“ The Lord forgive her ! ” said Yeo. “ But, your worship, we must have these rascals’ ordnance.”

“ And their clothes too, Yeo, if we wish to get down the Magdalena unchallenged. Now listen, my masters all ! We have won, by God’s good grace, gold enough to serve us the rest of our lives, and that without losing a single man ; and may yet win more, if we be wise, and He thinks good. But oh, my friends, remember Mr. Oxenham and his crew ; and do not make God’s gift our ruin, by faithlessness, or greediness, or any mutinous haste.”

“ You shall find none in us ! ” cried several men. “ We know your worship. We can trust our general.”

“ Thank God ! ” said Amyas. “ Now then, it will be no shame or sin to make the Indians carry it, saving the women, whom God forbid we should burden. But we must pass through the very heart of the Spanish settlements, and by the town of Saint Martha

itself. So the clothes and weapons of these Spaniards we must have, let it cost us what labour it may. How many lie in the road ? ”

“ Thirteen here, and about ten up above,” said Cary.

“ Then there are near twenty missing. Who will volunteer to go down over cliff, and bring up the spoil of them ? ”

“ I, and I, and I ; ” and a dozen stepped out, as they did always when Amyas wanted anything done ; for the simple reason, that they knew that he meant to help at the doing of it himself.

“ Very well, then, follow me. Sir John, take the Indian lad for your interpreter, and try and comfort the souls of these poor heathens. Tell them, that they shall all be free.”

“ Why, who is that comes up the road ? ”

All eyes were turned in the direction of which he spoke. And, wonder of wonders ! up came none other than Ayacanora herself, blow-gun in hand, bow on back, and bedecked in all her feather garments, which last were rather the worse for a fortnight’s woodland travel.

All stood mute with astonishment, as, seeing Amyas, she uttered a cry of joy, quickened her pace into a run, and at last fell panting and exhausted at his feet.

“ I have found you ! ” she said ; “ you ran away from me, but you could not escape me ! ” And she fawned round Amyas, like a dog who has found his master, and then sat down on the bank, and burst into wild sobs.

“ God help us ! ” said Amyas, clutching his hair, as he looked down upon the beautiful weeper. “ What am I to do with her, over and above all these poor heathens ? ”

But there was no time to be lost, and over the cliff he scrambled ; while the girl, seeing that the main body of the English remained, sat down on a point of rock to watch him.

After half-an-hour’s hard work, the weapons, clothes, and armour of the fallen Spaniards were hauled up the cliff, and distributed in bundles among the men ; the rest of the corpses were thrown over the precipice, and they started again upon their road toward the Magdalena, while Yeo snorted like a war-horse who smells the battle, at the delight of once more handling powder and ball.

And now Amyas had time to ask Ayacanora the meaning of this her strange appearance. He wished her anywhere but where she was : but now that she was here, what heart could be so hard as not to take pity on the poor wild thing ? Passionately she told him how she had followed on their track day and night, and had every evening made sounds, as loud as she dared, in hopes of their

hearing her, and either waiting for her, or coming back to see what caused the noise. .

"Noises ? What did you make them with ?"

Ayacanora drew cautiously from under her feather cloak an object at which Amyas had hard work to keep his countenance. .

"Look !" whispered she, as if half afraid that the thing itself should hear her. "I have it—the holy trumpet !"

She told a long story, from which Amyas picked up, as far as he could understand her, that that trumpet had been for years the torment of her life ; the one thing in the tribe superior to her ; the one thing which she was not allowed to see, because, forsooth, she was a woman. But the day after the English went, the Piache chose to express his joy at their departure ; whereon, naturally, there was a fresh explosion between master and pupil, which ended, she confessed, in her burning the old rogue's hut over his head, from which he escaped with loss of all his conjuring-tackle. .

"I hope you have not killed him ?" said Amyas.

"I did beat him a little ; but I thought you would not let me kill him."

Amyas was half amused with her confession of his authority over her : but she went on,—

"And then I dare not go back to the Indians ; so I was forced to come after you."

"And is that, then, your only reason for coming after us ?" asked stupid Amyas.

He had touched some secret chord—though what it was he was too busy to inquire. The girl drew herself up proudly, blushing scarlet, and said—

"You never tell lies. Do you think that I would tell lies ?"

They soon left the high road ; and for several days held on downwards, hewing their path slowly and painfully through the thick underwood. On the evening of the fourth day, they had reached the margin of a river, at a point where it seemed broad and still enough for navigation. For those three days they had not seen a trace of human beings, and the spot seemed lonely enough for them to encamp without fear of discovery, and begin the making of their canoes. They began to spread themselves along the stream, in search of the soft-wooded trees proper for their purpose ; but hardly had their search begun, when, in the midst of a dense thicket, they came upon a sight which filled them with astonishment. Beneath a honeycombed cliff, which supported one enormous cotton-tree, was a spot of some thirty yards square sloping down to the stream, planted in rows with magnificent banana-plants, full twelve feet high, and bearing a long their huge

waxy leaves clusters of ripening fruit ; while, under their mellow shade, yams and cassava plants were flourishing luxuriantly, the whole being surrounded by a hedge of orange and scarlet flowers ; a tiny paradise of art and care. But where was its inhabitant ?

Aroused by the noise of their approach, a figure issued from a cave in the rocks, and, after gazing at them for a moment, came down the garden towards them. He was a tall and stately old man, whose snow-white beard and hair covered his chest and shoulders, while his lower limbs were wrapt in Indian-web. Slowly and solemnly he approached, a staff in one hand, a string of beads in the other, the living likeness of some old Hebrew prophet. He bowed courteously to Amyas, (who of course returned his salute), and was about to speak, when his eye fell upon the Indians, who were laying down their burdens in a heap under the trees. His mild countenance assumed instantly an expression of the acutest sorrow and displeasure ; and, striking his hands together, he spoke in Spanish,—

“ Alas ! miserable me ! Alas ! unhappy Señors ! Do my old eyes deceive me. Has the accursed thirst of gold, the ruin of my race, penetrated even into this my solitude ? Oh, Señors, Señors, know you not that you bear with you your own poison, your own familiar fiend, the root of every evil ? And is it not enough for you, Señors, to load yourselves with the wedge of Achan, and partake his doom, but you must make these hapless heathens the victims of your greed and cruelty ? ”

“ We have preserved, and not enslaved these Indians, ancient ~~Indians~~,” said Amyas proudly ; “ and to-morrow will see them as free as the birds over our heads.”

“ Free ? Then you cannot be countrymen of mine ! But pardon an old man, my son, if he has spoken too hastily in the bitterness of his own experience. But who and whence are you ? And why are you bringing into this lonely wilderness that gold—for I know too well the shape of those accursed packets, which would God that I had never seen ! ”

“ What we are, reverend Sir, matters little, as long as we behave to you as the young should to the old. We must be your neighbours, I fear, for a day or two : but I can promise you, that your garden shall be respected, on condition that you do not inform any human soul of our being here.”

“ God forbid, Señor, that I should try to increase the number of my visitors, much less to bring hither strife and blood, of which I have seen too much already. As you have come in peace, in peace depart. Leave me alone with God and my penitence, and may the Lord have mercy on you ! ”

And he was about to withdraw, when, recollecting himself, he turned suddenly to Amyas, again,—

“Pardon me, Señor, if, after forty years of utter solitude, I shrink at first from the conversation of human beings, and forget, in the habitual shyness of a *rècluse*, the duties of a hospitable gentleman of Spain. My garden, and all which it produces, is at your service. Only let me entreat that these poor Indians shall have their share ; for heathens though they be, Christ died for them ; and I cannot but cherish in my soul some secret hope that He did not die in vain.”

“God forbid !” said Brimblecombe. “They are no worse than we, for aught I see, whatsoever their fathers may have been ; and they have fared no worse than we since they have been with us, nor will, I promise you.”

A camp was soon formed ; and that evening the old hermit asked Amyas, Cary, and Brimblecombe, to come up into his cavern.

They went ; and after the accustomed compliments had passed, he began with a faltering voice,—

“You may be equally surprised, Señors, at my presence in such a spot, and at my asking you to become my guests even for one evening, while I have no better hospitality to offer you.”

“It is superfluous, Señor to offer us food in your own habitation, when you have already put all that you possess at our command.”

“True, Señors : and my motive for inviting you was, perhaps, somewhat of a selfish one. I am possessed by a longing to unburthen my heart of a tale which I never yet told to man ; and which I fear can give to you nothing but pain : and yet I will entreat you, of your courtesy, to hear of that which you cannot amend, simply in mercy to a man who feels that he must confess to some one, or die as miserable as he has lived. Will you then hear an old man’s tale ?”

The three young men, equally surprised and interested by this exordium, could only entreat their host to “Use their ears as those of his slaves,” on which, after fresh apologies, he began,—

“Know, then, victorious cavaliers, that I, whom you now see here as a poor hermit, was formerly one of the foremost of that terrible band, who went with Pizarro to the conquest of Peru. Eighty years old am I this day ; and twenty years old was I, when I sailed with that fierce man from Panama, to do that deed with which all earth, and heaven, and hell itself, I fear, has rung. How we endured, suffered, and triumphed ; how, and with success, and glutted with blood, we turned our swords against each other, I

need not tell to you. For what gentleman of Europe knows no our glory and our shame ? ”

And smiting on his breast, the old warrior went on—

“ As I said, we were mad with blood ; and none more mad than I. Surely it is no fable that men are possessed, even in this latter age, by devils. Why else did I rejoice in slaying ? Why else was I, the son of a noble and truthful cavalier of Castile, among the foremost to urge upon my general the murder of the Inca ? Why did I rejoice over his dying agonies ? Why, when Don Ferdinando de Soto returned, and upbraided us with our villainy, did I, instead of confessing the sin which that noble cavalier set before us, withstand him to his face, ay, and would have drawn the sword on him ; but that he refused to fight a liar, as he said that I was ? ”

“ Then Don de Soto was against the murder ? So his own grandson told me. But I had heard of him only as a tyrant and a butcher.”

“ Señor, he was compact of good and evil, as are other men : he has paid dearly for his sin ; let us hope that he has been paid in turn for his righteousness. So you know his grandson ? I trust he is a noble cavalier ? ”

Amyas was silent, the old gentleman saw that he had touched some sore point, and continued,—

“ And why, again, Señors, did I after that day give myself up to cruelty as to a sport ; yea, thought that I did God service by destroying the creatures whom He had made ; I who now dare not ~~destroy~~ a gnat, lest I harm a being more righteous than myself ? Was I mad ? In a word, there was no deed of blood done for the next few years in which I had not my share, if it were but within my reach. When Challuchima was burned, I was consenting ; when that fair girl, the wife of Inca Manco, was tortured to death, I smiled at the agonies at which she too smiled, and taunted on the soldiers, to try if I could wring one groan from her before she died. You know what followed ; the pillage, the violence, the indignities offered to the virgins of the Sun. Señors, I will not pollute your chaste ears with what was done. But, Señors, I had a brother.”

And the old man paused awhile.

“ A brother—whether better or worse than me. God knows, before whom he has appeared ere now. There was a maiden in one of those convents, Señors, more beautiful than day : and (I blush to tell it) the two brothers of whom I spoke quarrelled for the possession of her. They struck each other, Señors ! Who struck first I know not ; but swords were drawn, and———.

The cavaliers round parted them, crying shame. And one of those two brothers—the one who speaks to you now—crying, ‘If I cannot have her, no man shall!’ turned the sword which was aimed at his brother, against that hapless maiden—and—hear me out, Señors, before you flee from my presence as from that of a monster!—stabbed her to the heart. And as she died—one moment more, Señors, that I may confess, all!—she looked up in my face with a smile as of heaven, and thanked me for having rid her once and for all from Christians and their villainy.”

The old man paused.

“God forgive you, Señor!” said Jack Brimblecombe, softly.

“You do not then turn from me? Do not curse me?”

The old man continued his story—of murder, of deaths, of treachery and then looked to his hearers for their verdict.

“I hold, Sir,” said Jack, modestly, “according to holy Scripture, that whosoever repents from his heart, as God knows you seem to have done, is forgiven there and then; and though his sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow, for the sake of Him who died for all.”

“Amen! Amen!” said the old man, looking lovingly at his little crucifix. “I hope and pray—His name is love. I know it now; who better? But, Sir, even if He has forgiven me, how can I forgive myself?”

“Heretic as I am, Sir, you will not believe me when I tell you that God accepts your penitence.”

“My heart tells me so already, at moments. But how know I that it does not lie?”

“Señor,” said Jack, “the best way to punish oneself for doing ill, seems to me to go and do good; and the best way to find out whether God means you well, is to find out whether He will help you to do well. If you have wronged Indians in time past, whether you cannot right them now. If you can, you are safe. For the Lord will not send the devil’s servants to do His work.”

The old man held down his head.

“Señor, shall I confess my weakness? A voice within me has bid me a hundred times go forth, and labour for those oppressed wretches, but I dare not obey. I dare not look them in the face. I should fancy that they knew my story and would turn from me in horror.”

“Señor,” said Amyas, “there are but the sick fancies of a noble spirit, feeding on itself in solitude. You have but to try to conquer.”

“And look now,” said Jack, “if you dare not go forth to help the Indians, see now how God has brought the Indians to your own door. Oh, excellent Sir—”

"Call me not excellent," said the old man, smiting his breast.

"I do, and shall, Sir, while I see in you an excellent repentance, an excellent humility, and an excellent justice," said Jack. "But oh, Sir, look upon these forty souls, whom we must leave behind, like sheep which have no shepherd. Could you not teach them to fear God and to love each other, to live like rational men, perhaps to die like Christians? They would obey you as a dog obeys his master. You might be their king, their father, yea, their pope, if you would."

"You do not speak like a Lutheran."

"I am not a Lutheran, but an Englishman."

"God help me!" said the old warrior.

The talk lasted long into the night, but Amyas was up long before daybreak felling the trees; and as he and Cary walked back to breakfast, the first thing which they saw, was the old man in his garden with four or five Indian children round him, talking smilingly to them.

"The old man's heart is sound," said Will. "No man is lost who is fond of little children."

"Ah, Señors!" said the hermit as they came up, "you see that I have begun already to act upon your advice."

"And you have begun at the right end," quoth Amyas; "if you win the children, you win the mothers."

"And if you win the mothers," quoth Will, "the poor fathers must needs obey their wives, and follow in the wake."

The old man only sighed. "The prattle of these little ones softens my hard heart, Señors, with a new pleasure."

That day Amyas assembled the Indians, and told them that they must obey the hermit as their king, and settle there as best they could: for if they broke up and wandered away, nothing was left for them but to fall one by one into the hands of the Spaniards. They heard him with their usual melancholy and stupid acquiescence, and went and came as they were bid, like animated machines.

So went on several days, during which the trees were felled, and the process of digging them out began; while Ayacanora, silent and moody, wandered into the woods all day with her blow-gun, and brought home at evening a load of parrots, monkeys, and curassows. But what to do with Ayacanora weighed heavily on the mind of Amyas. He opened his heart on the matter to the old hermit, and asked him, whether he would take charge of her. The latter smiled, and shook his head at the notion. "If your report of her be true, I may as well take in hand to tame a jaguar." However, he promised to try; and one evening, as they were all

standing together before the mouth of the cave, Ayacanora came up smiling with the fruit of her day's sport ; and Amyas, thinking this a fit opportunity, began a carefully-prepared harangue to her, which he intended to be altogether soothing, and even pathetic,—to the effect that the maiden, having no parents, was to look upon this good old man as her father ; that he would instruct her in the white man's religion, and teach her how to be happy and good, and so forth ; and that, in fine, she was to remain there with the hermit.

She heard him quietly, her great dark eyes opening wider and wider, her bosom swelling, her stature seeming to grow taller every moment, as she clenched her weapons firmly in both her hands. Beautiful as she always was, she had never looked so beautiful before ; and as Amyas spoke of parting with her, it was like throwing away a lovely toy : but it must be done, for her sake, for his, perhaps for that of all the crew.

The last words had hardly passed his lips, when, with a shriek of mingled scorn, rage, and fear, she dashed through the astonished group.

She turned again, and in another minute her gaudy plumes had vanished among the dark forest stems, as swift as if she had been a passing bird.

But Ayacanora did not return ; and ten days more went on in continual toil at the canoes without any news of her from the hunters. Amyas, by the bye, had strictly bidden these last not to follow the girl, not even to speak to her, if they came across her in their wanderings. He was shrewd enough to guess, that the only way to cure her sulkiness was to out-sulk her : but there was no sign of her presence in any direction : and the canoes being finished at last, the gold, and such provisions as they could collect were placed on board, and one evening the party prepared for their fresh voyage. They determined to travel as much as possible by night, for fear of discovery, especially in the neighbourhood of the few Spanish settlements, which were then scattered along the banks of the main-stream.

The sun had sunk ; the night had all but fallen ; the men were all on board ;—Amyas in command of one canoe, Cary of the other. The Indians were grouped on the bank, watching the party with their listless stare, and with them the young guide, who preferred remaining among Indians, and was made supremely happy by the present of a Spanish sword and an English axe : while in the midst the old hermit, with tears in his eyes, prayed God's blessing on them.

"I owe to you, noble cavaliers, new peace, new labour, I may

say, new life. May God be with you, and teach you to use your gold and your swords better than I used mine."

The adventurers waved their hands to him.

About twenty yards below, a wooded rock, some ten feet high, hung over the stream. The river was there not more than fifteen yards broad ; deep near the rock, shallow on the further side ; and Amyas's canoe led the way within ten feet of the stone.

As he passed, a dark figure leapt from the bushes on the edge, and plunged heavily into the water close to the boat. All started. A jaguar ? No : he would not have missed so short a spring. What then ? A human being ?

A head rose panting to the surface, and with a few strong strokes the swimmer had clutched the gunwale. It was Ayacanora !

"Go back !" shouted Amyas. "Go back, girl !"

She uttered the same wild cry with which she had fled into the forest : "I will die, then !" and she threw up her arms. Another moment, and she had sunk.

To see her perish before his eyes ! who could bear that ? Her hands alone were above the surface. Amyas caught convulsively at her in the darkness, and seized her wrist.

A yell rose from the crew as from a cage of lions. There was a rush and a swirl along the surface of the stream ; and "Caiman ! caiman !" shouted twenty voices.

Now, or never, for the strong arm ! "To larboard, men, or over we go !" cried Amyas, and with one huge heave, he lifted the slender body upon the gunwale. Her lower limbs were still in the water, when, within arm's length, rose above the stream a huge muzzle. The lower jaw lay flat, the upper reached as high as Amyas's head.

There was the gleam of an axe from above, a sharp ringing blow, and the jaws came together with a clash which rang from bank to bank. He had missed her ! Swerving beneath the blow, his snout had passed beneath her body, and smashed up against the side of the canoe, as the striker, overbalanced, fell headlong overboard upon the monster's back.

"Who is it ?"

"Yeo !" shouted a dozen.

Man and beast went down together, and where they sank, the moonlight shone on a great swirling eddy, while all held their breaths, and Ayacanora cowered down into the bottom of the canoe, her proud spirit utterly broken, for the first time, by the terror of that great need.

None heeded her ; not even Amyas, round whose knees she clung, fawning like a spaniel dog : for where was Yeo ?

Another swirl ; a shout from the canoe abreast of them, and Yeo rose, having dived clean under his own boat, and risen between the two.

" Safe as yet, lads ! Heave me a line, or he'll have me after all."

But ere the brute reappeared, the old man was safe on board.

" The Lord has stood by me," panted he, as he shot the water from his ears. " We went down together : I knew the Indian trick, and being uppermost, had my thumbs in his eyes before he could turn : but he carried me down to the very mud. My breath was nigh gone, so I left go, and struck up : but my toes tingled as I rose again, I'll warrant. There the beggar is, looking for me, I declare !"

And, true enough, there was the huge brute swimming slowly round and round, in search of his lost victim.

" Yeo !" asked Amyas, in a low voice, " what shall we do with her ?"

" Why ask me, Sir ?" said the old man, as he had a very good right to ask.

" Because, when one don't know oneself, one had best inquire of one's elders. Besides, you saved her life at the risk of your own, and have a right to a voice in the matter, if any one has."

" Then, my dear young Captain, if the Lord puts a precious soul under your care, don't you refuse to bear the burden He lays on you."

Amyas was silent awhile ; while Ayacanora, who was evidently utterly exhausted by the night's adventure, and probably by long wanderings, watchings, and weepings which had gone before it, sank with her head against his knee, fell fast asleep, and breathed as gently as a child.

At last he rose in the canoe, and called Cary alongside.

" Listen to me, gentlemen, and sailors ail. You know that we have a maiden on board here, by no choice of our own. Whether she will be a blessing to us, God alone can tell : but she may turn to the greatest curse which has befallen us, ever since we came out over Bar three years ago. Promise me one thing, or I put her ashore the next beach ; and that is, that you will treat her as if she were your own sister ; and make an agreement here and now, that if the maid comes to harm among us, the man that is guilty shall hang for it by the neck till he's dead, even though he be I, Captain Leigh, who speak to you. I'll hang you, as I am a Christian ; and I give you free leave to hang me."

" Amen !" said Brimblecombe. " Amen !" said Yeo ; and many an honest voice joined in that honest compact, and kept it too, like men.

CHAPTER XXII

HOW THEY TOOK THE GREAT GALLEON

ONE more glance at the golden tropic sea, and the golden tropic evenings, by the shore of New Granada in the golden Spanish Main.

The bay of Santa Martha is rippling before the land-breeze, one sheet of living flame. The mighty forests are sparkling with myriad fire-flies. The lazy mist which lounges round the inner hills shines golden in the sunset. The heaven, the hills, the sea, are one sparkling garland of jewels—what wonder if the soil be jewelled also? if every water-course and bank of earth be spangled with emeralds and rubies, with grains of gold, and feathered wreaths of native silver?

So though in a poetic mood, the Bishop of Carthagena, as he sat in the state cabin of that great galleon, *The City of the True Cross*, and looked pensively out of the window towards the shore. The good man was in a state of holy calm. His stout figure rested on one easy chair, his stout ankles on another, beside a table spread with oranges and limes, guavas and pine-apples, and all the fruits of Ind.

An Indian girl, bedizened with scarfs and gold chains, kept off the flies with a fan of feathers; and by him, in a pail of ice from the Horqueta (the gift of some pious Spanish lady, who had "spent" an Indian or two in bringing down the precious offering), stood more than one flask of virtuous wine of Alicant. But he was not so selfish, good man, as to enjoy either ice or wine alone; Don Pedro, colonel of the soldiers on board, Don Alvarez, Intendant of His Catholic Majesty's Customs at Santa Martha, and Don Paul, Captain of mariners in *The City of the True Cross*, had by his especial request, come to his assistance that evening, and with two friars, who sat at the lower end of the table, were doing their best to prevent the good man from taking too bitterly to heart the present unsatisfactory state of his cathedral town, which had just been sacked and burnt by an old friend of ours, Sir Francis Drake.

At length the Bishop arose and called his Indian slave.

"Tita! Sling my hammock. Señors, you will excuse age and infirmities. Fray Gerundio, go to bed!—Ah, Tita! bring me the casket."

And when his guests were gone, the old man began mumbling prayers out of his breviary, and fingering over jewels and gold.

He then climbed into his hammock. Tita drew the mosquito net over him, wrapt another round her own head, and slept, or seemed to sleep ; for she coiled herself up upon the floor, and master and slave soon snored a merry bass to the treble of the mosquitos.

It was long past midnight, and the moon was down. The sentinels, who had tramped and challenged overhead till they thought their officers were sound asleep, had slipped out of the unwholesome rays of the planet.

Now the bishop had awoke, and turned himself over uneasily ; for the wine was dying out within him, and his shoulders had slipped down, and his heels up, and his head ached : so he sat upright in his hammock, looked out upon the bay, and called Tita.

"Put another pillow under my head, child ! What is that ? a fish ?"

Tita looked. She did not think it was a fish : but she did not choose to say so ; for it might have produced an argument, and she had her reasons for not keeping his holiness awake.

The bishop looked again ; settled that it must be a white whale, prayed for a safe voyage, and snored once more.

Presently the cabin-door opened gently, and the head of the Señor Intendant appeared.

Tita sat up ; and then began crawling like a snake along the floor, among the chairs and tables, by the light of the cabin lamp.

"Is he asleep ?"

"Yes : but the casket is under his head."

"Curse him ! How shall we take it ?"

"I brought him a fresh pillow half-an-hour ago ; I hung his hammock wrong on purpose that he might want one. I thought to slip the box away as I did it : but the old ox nursed it in both hands all the while."

"What shall we do, in the name of all the fiends ? She sails to-morrow morning, and then all is lost."

Tita showed her white teeth, and touched the dagger which hung by the intendant's side.

"I dare not !" said the rascal, with a shudder.

"I dare !" said she. "He whipped my mother, because she would not give me up to him to be taught in his schools, when she went to the mines. And she went to the mines, and died there in three months. I saw her go, with a chain round her neck ; but she never came back again. Yes ; I dare kill him ! I will kill him ! I will !"

The Señor felt his mind much relieved. He had no wish, of course, to commit the murder himself ; for he was a good Catholic

and feared the devil. But Tita was an Indian, and her being lost did not matter so much. Indians' souls were cheap, like their bodies. So he answered, "But we shall be discovered !"

"I will leap out of the window with the casket, and swim ashore. They will never suspect you, and they will fancy I am drowned."

"The sharks may seize you, Tita. You had better give me the casket."

Tita smiled. "You would not like to lose that, eh ? though you care little about losing me. And yet you told me that you loved me ?"

"And I do love you, Tita ! light of my eyes ! life of my heart ! I swear, by all the saints, I love you. I will marry you, I swear I will—I will swear on the crucifix, if you like !"

"Swear, then, or I do not give you the casket," said she.

He swore, trembling, and deadly pale.

"Give me your dagger."

"No, not mine. It may be found. I shall be suspected. What if my sheath were seen to be empty ?"

"Your knife will do. His throat is soft enough."

And she glided stealthily as a cat toward the hammock, while her cowardly companion stood shivering at the other end of the cabin, and turned his back to her, that he might not see the deed.

He stood waiting, one minute—two—five ? was it not an hour, rather ? A cold sweat bathed his limbs.

There was a struggle—ah ! she was about it now ; a stifled cry—Ah ! he had dreaded that most of all, to hear the old man cry. Would there be much blood ? He hoped not. Another struggle, and Tita's voice, apparently muffled, called for help.

"I cannot help you. I dare not help you !" hissed he. "She-devil ! you have begun it, and you must finish it yourself !"

A heavy arm from behind clasped his throat. The bishop had broken loose from her, and seized him ! Or was it his ghost ? And forgetting all but mere wild terror, he opened his lips for a scream, which would have wakened every soul on board. But a handkerchief was thrust into his mouth ; and in another minute he found himself bound hand and foot, and laid upon the table by a gigantic enemy. The cabin was full of armed men, two of whom were lashing up the bishop in his hammock ; two more had seized Tita ; and more were clambering up into the stern-gallery beyond, wild figures, with bright blades and armour gleaming in the starlight.

"Now, Will," whispered the giant who had seized him, "forward and clap the fore-hatches on ; and shout Fire ! with all

your might. Girl ! murderess ! your life is in my hands. Tell me where the commander sleeps, and I pardon you."

Tita looked up at the huge speaker, and obeyed in silence. The Intendant heard him enter the colonel's cabin, and then a short scuffle, and silence for a moment.

But only for a moment ; for already the alarm had been given, and mad confusion reigned through every deck. Amyas (for it was none other) had already gained the poop ; the sentinels were gagged and bound ; and every half-naked wretch who came trembling up on deck in his shirt by the main hatchway, calling out, "Fire !" was hurled into the scuppers, and there secured.

"Lower away that boat !" shouted Amyas in Spanish to his first batch of prisoners.

The men, unarmed and naked, could but obey.

"Now then, jump in. Here, hand them to the gangway as they come up."

It was done : and as each appeared, he was kicked to the scuppers, and bundled down over the side.

"She's full. Cast loose now, and off with you. If you try to board again, we'll sink you."

"Fire ! fire !" shouted Cary, forward—"Up the main hatchway for your lives !"

The ruse succeeded utterly ; and before half-an-hour was over, all the ship's boats which could be lowered were filled with Spaniards in their shirts, getting ashore as best they could.

"Get the main and foresail up, Will !" said Amyas. "cut the cable ; and we will plume the quarry as we fly."

"Spoken like a good falconer. By the bye, where is the commander ?"

Alas ! Don Pedro, forgotten in the bustle, had been lying on the deck in his shirt, helplessly bound, exhausting that part of his vocabulary which related to the unseen world. By some chance his men were able to free him and, in a few minutes, the Spaniards left on board were able to put up such a hail of fire that the English were obliged to seek shelter. Yeo rushed round and round, probing every gun with his sword.

"Here's a patararo loaded ! Now for a match, lads."

Luckily one of the English had kept his match alight during the scuffle.

"Thanks be ! Help me to unship the gun—the mast's in the way here."

The patararo, or brass swivel, was unshipped.

"Steady, lads, and keep it level, or you'll shake out the priming." Missiles were found—odds and ends—and crammed into

the swivel up to the muzzle : and, in another minute, its " cargo of notions " was crashing into the poop-windows, silencing the fire from thence effectually enough for the time.

" Now, then, a rush forward, and right in along the deck ! " shouted Yeo ; and the whole party charged through the cabin-doors, which their shot had burst open, and hewed their way from room to room.

In the meanwhile, the Spaniards above had fought fiercely : but, in spite of superior numbers, they had gradually given back before the " demoniacal possession of those blasphemous heretics, who fought, not like men, but like furies from the pit."

" Yield, Señor ! " shouted Amyas to the commander, who had been fighting like a lion, back to back with the captain of mariners.

" Never ! You have bound me, and insulted me ! Your blood or mine must wipe out the stain ! "

And he rushed on Amyas. There was a few moments' heavy fence between them ; and then Amyas cut right at his head. But as he raised his arm, the Spaniard's blade slipped along his ribs, and snapped against the point of his shoulder-blade. An inch more to the left, and it would have been through his heart. The blow fell, nevertheless, and the commandant fell with it, stunned by the flat of the sword, but not wounded ; for Amyas's hand had turned, as he winced from his wound. But the sea-captain, seeing Amyas stagger, sprang at him, and, seizing him by the wrist, ere he could raise his sword again, shortened his weapon to run him through. Amyas made a grasp at his wrist in return, but, between his faintness and the darkness, missed it.—Another moment, and all would have been over !

A bright blade flashed close past Amyas's ear : the sea-captain's grasp loosened, and he dropped a corpse ; while over him, like an angry lioness above her prey, stood Ayacanora, her long hair floating in the wind, her dagger raised aloft, as she looked round, challenging all and every one to approach.

" Are you hurt ? " panted she.

" A scratch, child.—What do you do here ? Go back, go back."

Ayacanora slipped back like a scolded child, and vanished in the darkness.

The battle was over. The Spaniards, seeing their commanders fall, laid down their arms, and cried for quarter. It was given ; the poor fellows were tied together, two and two, and seated in a row on the deck ; the commandant, sorely bruised, yielded himself perforce ; and the galleon was taken.

Amyas hurried forward to get the sails set. As he went down the poop-ladder, there was someone sitting on the lowest step.

"Who is here—wounded?"

"I am not wounded," said a woman's voice, low, and stifled with sobs.

It was Ayacanora. She rose, and let him pass. He saw that her face was bright with tears: but he hurried on, nevertheless.

"Perhaps I did speak a little hastily to her, considering she saved my life; but what a brimstone 't is! Now then, lads! Get the Santa Fé gold up out of the canoes, and then we will put her head to the north-east, and away for old England. Mr. Brimblecombe! don't say that Eastward-ho don't bring luck this time."

And Amyas walked forward among the men.

"Muster the men, boatswain, and count them."

"All here, Sir, but the six poor fellows who are laid forward."

"Now, my men," said Amyas, "for three years you and I have wandered on the face of the earth, seeking our fortune; and we have found it at last, thanks be to God! Now, what was our promise and vow which we made to God beneath the tree of Guayra, if He should grant us good fortune, and bring us home again with a prize? Was it not, that the dead should share with the living; and that every man's portion, if he fell, should go to his widow or his orphans, or if he had none, to his parents?"

"It was, Sir," said Yeo, "and I trust that the Lord will give these men grace to keep their vow. They have seen enough of His providences by this time to fear Him."

"I doubt them not: but I remind them of it. The Lord has put into our hands a rich prize; and what with the gold which we have already, we are well paid for all our labours. Let us thank Him, with fervent hearts, as soon as the sun rises. For me, lest you should think me covetous: I could claim my brother's share: but I hereby give it up freely into the common stock, for the use of the whole ship's crew, who have stood by me through weal and woe as men never stood before, as I believe, by any captain. So, now to prayers, lads, and then to eat our breakfast."

So, to the Spaniards' surprise, (who most of them believed that the English were Atheists,) to prayers they went.

After which, Brimblecombe contrived to inspire the black cook and the Portuguese steward with such energy, that by seven o'clock the latter worthy appeared on deck, and with profound reverences, announced to "The most excellent and heroic Señor Adelantado Captain Englishman," that breakfast was ready in the state-cabin.

"You will do us the honour of accompanying us as our guest, Sir, or our host, if you prefer the title," said Amyas to the Commandant, who stood by.

"Pardon, Señor : but honour forbids me to eat with one who has offered to me the indelible insult of bonds."

"Oh !" said Amyas, taking off his hat, "then pray accept on the spot my humble apologies for all which has passed, and my assurances that the indignities which you have unfortunately endured, were owing altogether to the necessities of war, and not to any wish to hurt the feeling of so valiant a soldier and gentleman."

"It is enough, Señor," said the Commandant, bowing and shrugging his shoulders—for indeed, he too was very hungry ; while Cary whispered to Amyas,—

"You will make a courtier, yet, old lad."

"I am not in jesting humour, Will : my mind sadly misgives me that we shall hear black news, and have, perhaps, to do a black deed yet, on board here. Señor, I follow you."

At breakfast, the commandant mentioned Drake twice but, each time, a fit of coughing prevented him getting any further. This prompted Amyas to ask :

"But what of Drake ?"

"Do you not know, Sir, that he and his fleet, only last year, swept the whole of this coast, and took, with shame I confess it, Cartagena, San Domingo, St. Augustine, and —— I see you are too courteous, Señors, to express before me what you have a right to feel. But, Señor Captain, how came you hither, if I may ask ? That you needed no art-magic after you came on board, I, alas ! can testify but too well : but what spirit—whether good or evil, I ask not—brought you on board, and whence ? Where is your ship ? I thought that all Drake's squadron had left six months ago"

"Our ship, Señor, has lain this three years rotting on the coast near Cape Codera."

"Ah ! we heard of that bold adventure—but we thought you all lost in the interior."

"You did ? Can you tell me, then, where the Señor Governor of La Guayra may be now ?"

"The Señor Don Guzman de Soto," said the Commandant, in a somewhat constrained tone, "is said to be at present in Spain, having thrown up his office in consequence of domestic matters, of which I have not the honour of knowing anything."

Amyas longed to ask more : but he knew that the well-bred Spaniard would tell him nothing which concerned another man's wife ; and went on.

"What befell us after, I tell you frankly."

And Amyas told his story, from the landing at Guayra to the

passage down the Magdalena. The Commandant lifted up his hands.

"Were it not forbidden to me, as a Catholic, most invincible Señor, I should say that the Divine protection has indeed—"

"Ah," said one of the two friars, who were among the prisoners, "that you could be brought, Señors, to render thanks for your miraculous preservation to her to whom alone it is due, Mary, the fount of mercies!"

"We have done well enough without her as yet," said Amvas bluntly.

"Here's the health of our saintly and venerable guest," said Cary: while the Commandant whispered to Amvas, "Fat old tyrant! I hope you have found his money—for I am sure he has some on board, and I should be loth that you lost the advantage of it."

"I shall have to say a few words to you about that money this morning, Commandant: by the by, they had better be said now. My Lord Bishop, do you know that had we not taken this ship when we did, you had lost not merely money, as you have now, but life itself?"

"Money? I had none to lose! Life?—what do you mean?" asked the bishop, turning very pale.

"This, Sir. That it ill befits one to lie, whose throat has been saved from the assassin's knife but four hours since. When we entered the stern-gallery, we found two persons, now on board this ship, in the very act, Sir, and article, of cutting your sinful throat, that they might rob you of the casket which lay beneath your pillow. A moment more, and you were dead. We seized and bound them, and so saved your life. Is that plain, Sir?"

The bishop looked steadfastly and stupidly into Amvas's face, heaved a deep sigh, and gradually sank back in his chair, dropping the glass from his hand.

"He is in a fit! Call in the surgeon! Run!" and up jumped kind-hearted Jack, and brought in the surgeon of the galleon.

"Is this possible, Señor?" asked the Commandant.

"It is true. Door, there! Evans! Go and bring in that rascal whom we left bound in his cabin!"

Evans went, and the Commandant continued—

"But the stern-gallery? How, in the name of all witches and miracles, came your valour thither!"

"Simply enough, and owing neither to witch nor miracle. The night before last we passed the mouth of the bay in our two canoes, which we had lashed together after the fashion I had seen in the Moluccas, to keep them afloat in the surf. We had scraped the

canoes bright the day before, and rubbed them with white clay, that they might be invisible at night ; and so we got safely to the Morro Grande, passing within half a mile of your ship."

"Oh, my scoundrels of sentinels !"

"We landed at the back of the Morro, and lay there all day, being purposed to do that which, with your pardon, we have done. We took our sails of Indian cloth, whitened them likewise with clay which we had brought with us from the river (expecting to find a Spanish ship as we went along the coast, and determined to attempt her, or die with honour), and laid them over us on the canoes, paddling from underneath them. So that, had your sentinels been awake, they would have hardly made us out, till we were close on board. We had provided ourselves, instead of ladders, with bamboos rigged with cross-pieces, and a hook of strong wood at the top of each ; they hang at your stern-gallery now. And the rest of the tale I need not tell you."

The Commandant rose in his courtly Spanish way,—

"Your admirable story, Señor, proves to me how truly your nation, while it has yet, and I trust will ever have, to dispute the palm of valour with our own, is famed throughout the world for ingenuity, and for daring beyond that of mortal man."

"You are, like your nation, only too generous, Señor. But what noise is that outside ? Cary, go and see."

But ere Cary could reach the door, it was opened ; and Evans presented himself with a terrified face.

"Here's villainy, Sir ! The Don's murdered, and cold ; the Indian lass fled ; and as we searched the ship for her, we found an Englishwoman, as I'm a sinful man !—and a shocking sight she is to see !"

"An Englishwoman ?" cried all three, springing forward.

"Bring her in !" said Amyas, turning very pale ; and as he spoke, Yeo and another led into the cabin a figure scarcely human.

An elderly woman, dressed in the yellow "San Benito" of the Inquisition, with ragged grey locks hanging about a countenance distorted by suffering, and shrunk by famine. She lifted up her fettered wrist to shade her face : and as she did so, disclosed a line of fearful scars upon her skinny arm.

"Look there, Sirs !" said Yeo, pointing to them with a stern smile. "Here's some of these Popish gentry's handiwork. I know well enough how those marks came ;" and he pointed to the similar scars on his own wrist. The Commandant, as well as the Englishmen, recoiled with horror.

"Holy Virgin ! what wretch is this on board my ship ? Bishop, is this the prisoner whom you sent on board ?"

The bishop, who had been slowly recovering his senses, looked at her a moment ; and then thrusting his chair back, crossed himself, and almost screamed, " Malefica ! Malefica ! Who brought her here ? Turn her away, gentlemen ; turn her eye away ; she will bewitch, fascinate "—and he began muttering prayers.

Amyas seized him by the shoulder, and shook him on to his legs.

" Swine ! who is this ? Wake up, coward, and tell me, or I will cut you piecemeal ! "

But ere the bishop could answer, the woman uttered a wild shriek, and pointing to the taller of the two monks, cowered behind Yeo.

" He here ? " cried she in broken Spanish. " Take me away ! Oh ! why is he come again ? Did they not say that I should have no more torments ? "

The monk turned pale : but fixing his dark eyes full on the woman, he bade her be silent so sternly, that she shrank down like a beaten hound.

" Silence, dog ! " said Will Cary.

Amyas stood silent with fear and horror ; some instinct told him, that he was on the point of hearing news for which he feared to ask. But Jack spoke,—

" My dear soul ! my dear soul ! don't you be afraid ; and the Lord will stand by you, if you will but tell the truth. We are all Englishmen, and men of Devon, as you seem to be by your speech ; and this ship is ours ; and the pope himself shan't touch you."

" Devon ? " she said, doubtingly ; " Devon ? Whence, then ? "

" Bideford men. This is Mr. Will Cary, of Clovelly. If you are a Devon woman, you've heard tell of the Carys, to be sure."

The woman made a rush forward, and threw her fettered arms round Will's neck,—

" Oh, Mr. Cary, my dear life ! Mr. Cary ! and so you too. Oh, who ever sent you here, my dear Mr. Will, then, to save a poor wretch from the pit ? "

" Who on earth are you ? "

" Don't you mind Lucy Passmore, as charmed your warts for you when you was a boy ? "

" Lucy Passmore ! " almost shrieked all three friends. " She that went off with—"

" Yes ! she that sold her own soul, and persuaded that dear saint to sell hers ; she that did the devil's work."

" Where is Doña de—Rose Salterne ? " shouted Will and Jack.

" Where is my brother Frank ? " shouted Amyas.

" Dead, dead, dead ! "

"I knew it," said Amyas, sitting down again calmly.

"How did she die?"

"The Inquisition—he!" pointing to the monk. "Ask him—he betrayed her to her death. And ask him!" pointing to the bishop. "he sat by her and saw her die."

"Woman, you rave!" said the bishop, getting up with a terrified air, and moving as far as possible from Amyas.

"How did my brother die, Lucy?" asked Amyas, still calmly.

"Who be you, Sir?"

A gleam of hope flashed across Amyas—she had not answered his question.

"I am Amyas Leigh of Burrough. Do you know aught of my brother Frank, who was lost at La Guayra?"

"Mr. Amyas! Heaven forgive me, that I did not know the Bigness of you. Your brother, Sir, died like a gentleman as he was."

"But how?" gasped Amyas.

"Burned, with her, Sir."

"Is this true, Sir?" said Amyas, turning to the bishop, with a very quiet voice.

"I, Sir?" stammered he, in panting haste. "I had nothing to do—I was compelled in my office of bishop to be an unwilling spectator—the secular arm, Sir; I could not interfere with that—any more than I can with the Holy Office. I do not belong to it—ask that gentleman—Sir? Saints and angels, Sir! what are you going to do?" shrieked he.

"Hang you!" said Amyas. "If I had been a Spaniard and a priest like yourself, I should have burnt you alive."

"Hang me?" shrieked the wretched old Balaam; and burst into abject howls for mercy.

"Take the dark monk, Yeo, and hang him too. Lucy Passmore do you know that fellow also?"

"No, Sir," said Lucy.

"Lucky for you, Fray Gerundio," said Will Cary.

But the bishop shrieked on.

"Oh! not yet. An hour, only an hour! I am not fit to die."

"That is no concern of mine," said Amyas. "I only know that you are not fit to live."

"Let us at least make our peace with God," said the dark monk.

"Hound! if your saints can really smuggle you up the back-stairs to heaven, they will do it without five minutes' more coaxing and flattering."

"Clear away that running rigging!" said Amyas, while the

dark Dominican stood perfectly collected, with something of a smile of pity at the miserable bishop ; and so died, with a " Domine in manus tuas," like a valiant man of Spain.

Amyas stood long in solemn silence, watching the two corpses dangling above his head. At last he drew a long breath, as if a load was taken off his heart.

Suddenly he looked round to his men, who were watching eagerly, to know what he would have done next.

"Hearken to me, my masters all, and may God hearken too, and do so to me, and more also, if, as long as I have eyes to see a Spaniard, and hands to hew him down, I do any other thing than hunt down that accursed nation day and night, and avenge all the innocent blood which has been shed by them since the day in which King Ferdinand drove out the Moors !"

"Amen !" said Salvation Yeo. "I need not to swear that oath ; for I have sworn it long ago, and kept it. Will your honour have us kill the rest of the idolaters ?"

"God forbid !" said Cary. "You would not do that, Amyas ?"

"No ; we will spare them. God has shown us a great mercy this day, and we must be merciful in it. We will land them at Cabo Velo. But henceforth till I die no quarter to a Spaniard."

"Amen !" said Yeo.

Amyas's whole countenance had changed in the last half-hour. He seemed to have grown years older. When he returned to the cabin, he bowed courteously to the Commandant, begged pardon of him for having played the host so ill, and entreated him to finish his breakfast.

"But, Señor—is it possible ? Is his holiness dead ?"

"He is hanged and dead, Señor. I would have hanged, could I have caught them, every living thing which was present at my brother's death, even to the very flies upon the wall. No more words, Señor ; your conscience tells you that I am just."

"Señor," said the Commandant—"One word—I trust there are no listeners—none of my crew, I mean—but I must exculpate myself in your eyes."

"Walk out, then, into the gallery with me."

"To tell you the truth, Señor—I trust in Heaven no one overhears.—You are just. This Inquisition is the curse of us, the weight which is crushing out the very life of Spain. No man dares speak. No man dares trust his neighbour, no, not his child, or the wife of his bosom. It avails nothing to be a good Catholic, as I trust I am," and he crossed himself, "when any villain whom you may offend, any unnatural son or wife who wishes to be rid of

you, has but to hint heresy against you, and you vanish into the Holy Office—and then God have mercy on you, for man has none. Noble ladies of my family, Sir, have vanished thither, carried off by night, we know not why ; we dare not ask why. To expostulate, even to inquire, would have been to share their fate. There is one now, Señor—Heaven alone knows whether she is alive or dead !—It was nine years since ; and we have never heard ; and and we shall never hear.”

And the Commandant's face worked frightfully.

“ She was my sister, Señor ! ”

“ Heavens ! Sir, and have you not avenged her ? ”

“ On churchmen, Señor, and I a Catholic ? To be burned at the stake in this life, and after that to all eternity beside ? Even a Spaniard dare not face that. When I saw you just now fearing those churchmen no more than you feared me, I longed, sinner that I am, to be a heretic like you.”

“ It will not take long to make a brave and wise gentleman who has suffered such things as you have, a heretic, as you call it—a free Christian man, as we call it.”

“ Tempt me not, Sir ! ” said the poor man, crossing himself fervently. “ Let us say no more. Obedience is my duty ; and for the rest the church must decide, according to her infallible authority—for I am a good Catholic, Señor, the best of Catholics, though a great sinner. I trust no one has overheard us ! ”

Amyas left him with a smile of pity, and went to look for Lucy Passmore, whom the sailors were nursing and feeding, while Ayacanora watched them with a puzzled face.

“ I will talk to you when you are better, Lucy,” said he, taking her hand. “ Now you must eat and drink, and forget all among us lads of Devon.”

“ Oh, dear blessed Sir, and you will send Sir John to pray with me ? For I turned, Sir, I turned : but I could not help it—I could not abear the torments : but she bore them, sweet angel—and more than I did. Oh, dear me ! ”

“ Lucy, I am not fit now to hear more. You shall tell me all to-morrow ; ” and he turned away.

“ Why do you take her hand ? ” said Ayacanora, half scornfully. “ She is old, and ugly, and dirty.”

“ She is an Englishwoman, child, and a martyr, poor thing ; and I would nurse her as I would my own mother.”

“ Why don't you make me an Englishwoman, and a martyr ? I could learn how to do anything that that old hag could do ! ”

“ Instead of calling her names, go and tend her ; that would be much fitter work for a woman than fighting among men.”

Ayacanora darted from him, thrust the sailors aside, and took possession of Lucy Passmore. "Where shall I put her?" asked she, of Amyas, without looking up.

"In the best cabin; and let her be served like a queen lads."

"No one shall touch her but me;" and taking up the withered frame in her arms, as if it were a doll, Ayacanora walked off with her in triumph, telling the men to go and mind the ship.

"The girl is mad," said one.

"Mad or not, she has an eye to our captain," said another.

"And where's the man that would behave to the poor wild thing as he does?"

But what was the story of the intendant's being murdered? Brimblecombe had seen him run into a neighbouring cabin, and when the door of it was opened, there was the culprit, but dead and cold, with a deep knife-wound in his side. Who could have done the deed? It must have been Tita, whom Brimblecombe had seen loose, and trying to free her lover.

The ship was searched from stem to stern: but no Tita. The mystery was never explained. That she had leapt overboard, and tried to swim ashore, none doubted: but whether she had reached it, who could tell? One thing was strange: that not only had she carried off no treasure with her, but that the gold ornaments which she had worn the night before, lay together in a heap on the table, close by the murdered man. Had she wished to rid herself of everything which had belonged to her tyrants?

The Commandant heard the whole story thoughtfully.

"Wretched man!" said he, "and he has a wife and children in Seville."

"A wife and children?" said Amyas; "and I heard him promise marriage to the Indian girl."

That was the only hint which gave a reason for his death. What, if, in the terror of discovery and capture, the scoundrel had dropped any self-condemning words about his marriage, any prayer for those whom he had left behind, and the Indian had overheard them? It might be so; at least, sin had brought its own punishment.

And so that wild night and day subsided. The prisoners were kindly used enough; for the Englishman, free from any petty love of tormenting, knows no mean between killing a foe outright, and treating him as a brother; and when, two days afterwards, they were sent ashore in the canoes off Cabo Velo, captives and captors shook hands all round; and Amyas, after returning the Commandant his sword, and presenting him with a case of the bishop's wine, bowed him courteously over the side.

"I trust that you will pay us another visit, valiant Señor Capitan," said the Spaniard, bowing and smiling.

CHAPTER XXIII

HOW SALVATION YEO FOUND HIS LITTLE MAID AGAIN

AYACANORA was a handful of trouble. During the journey home, she behaved more like a spoiled child than a rational being ; and, if Amyas scolded, there always came the threat to drown herself. She was remarkably sensitive as to her origin and would have given worlds to be taken for English.

One day, Salvation Yeo was chanting to himself one of those sea-songs beloved of the sailors, when somebody took up the refrain and went through with it from beginning to end. Yeo looked round and saw that the singer was Ayacanora. Suddenly, a thought rushed into his head which every reader will guess. Was Ayacanora his little maid ?

"Ask her for mercy's sake—ask her, Captain Leigh !" said Yeo.

"My child," said Amyas speaking in Indian, "how is it you sing that so much better than any other English ? Did you ever hear it before ?"

Ayacanora looked up at him puzzled, and shook her head ; and then—

"If you tell Indian to Ayacanora, she dumb. She must be English girl now, like poor Lucy."

"Well then," said Amyas, "do you recollect, Ayacanora—do you recollect—what shall I say ? anything that happened when you were a little girl ?"

She paused awhile ; and then moving her hands overhead—

"Trees—great trees like the Magdalena—always nothing but trees—wild and bad everything. Ayacanora won't talk about that."

"Do you mind anything that grew on those trees ?" asked Yeo eagerly.

She laughed. "Silly ! Flowers and fruit, and nuts—grow on all trees, and monkey-cups too. Ayacanora climbed up after them—when she was wild. I won't tell any more."

"But who taught you to call them monkey-cups ?" asked Yeo, trembling with excitement.

"Monkeys drink ; mono drink."

"Mono ?" said Yeo, foiled on one cast, and now trying another.

"How did you know the beasts were called monos ?"

"She might have heard it coming down with us," said Cary, who had joined the group.

"Ay, monos," said she, in a self-justifying tone. "Faces like little men, and tails. And one very dirty black one, with a beard, say Amen in a tree to all the other monkeys, just like Sir John on Sunday." This allusion to Brimblecombe and the preaching apes upset all but old Yeo.

"But don't you recollect any Christians?—white people?"

She was silent.

"Don't you mind a white mad?"

"Um?"

"A woman, a very pretty woman, with hair like his?" pointing to Amyas.

"No."

"What do you mind then, beside those Indians?" added Yeo, in despair.

She turned her back on him peevishly, as if tired with the efforts of her memory.

"Do try to remember," said Amyas; and she set to work again at once.

"Ayacanora mind great monkeys—black, oh, so high," and she held up her hand above her head, and made a violent gesture of disgust.

"Let us try again. Do you mind no great monkeys but those black ones!" asked Amyas.

"Yes," she said, after awhile—"Devil."

"Devil?" asked all three, who, of course, were by no means free from the belief that the fiend did actually appear to the Indian conjurers, such as had brought up the girl.

"Ay, him Sir John tell about on Sundays."

"Save and help us!" said Yeo: "and what was he like unto?"

She made various signs to intimate that he had a monkey's face, and a grey beard like Yeo's. So far so good: but now came a series of manipulations about her pretty little neck, which set all their fancies at fault.

"I know," said Cary, at last, bursting into a great laugh. "Sir Urian had a ruff on, as I live! Trunkhose too, my fair dame? Stop—I'll make sure. Was his neck like the Señor Commandant's, the Spaniard?"

Ayacanora clapped her hands at finding herself understood, and the questioning went on.

"The 'Devil' appeared like a monkey, with a grey beard, in a ruff;—humph!—"

"Ay!" said she, in good enough Spanish, "Monó de Panama; viejo diablo de Panama."

Yeo threw up his hands with a shriek—

"Oh Lord of all mercies! Those were the last words of Mr. Joh. Oxenham! Ay—and the Devil is surely none other than the devil Don Francisco Xararte! Oh dear! oh dear! oh dear! my sweet young lady! my pretty little maid! and don't you know me? Don't you know Salvation Yeo, that carried you over the mountains, and used to climb for the monkey-cups for you, my dear young lady? And William Penberthy too, that used to get you flowers; and your poor dear father, that was just like Mr. Cary there, only he had a black beard, and black curls, and swore terribly in his speech, like a Spaniard, my dear young lady?"

And the honest fellow, falling on his knees, covered Ayacanora's hands with kisses; while all the crew, fancying him gone suddenly mad, crowded aft.

"Steady, men, and don't vex him!" said Amyas. "He thinks that he has found his little maid at last."

"And so do I, Amyas, as I live," said Cary.

"Steady, steady, my masters all! If this turn out a wrong scent after all, his wits will crack. Mr. Yeo, can't you think of any other token?"

Yeo stamped impatiently. "What need then? It's her, I tell ye, and that's enough! What a beauty she's grown! Oh, dear! where were my eyes all this time, to behold her, and not to see her! 'Tis her very mortal self, it is! And don't you mind me, my dear, now? Don't you mind Salvation Yeo, that taught you to sing 'Heave my mariners all, O!' a-sitting on a log by the boat upon the sand, and there was a sight of red lilies grew on it in the moss, dear, now, wasn't there? and we made posies of them to put in your hair, now?"—And the poor old man ran on in a supplicating, suggestive tone, as if he could persuade the girl into becoming the person whom he sought.

Ayacanora had watched him, first angry, then amused, then attentive, and at last with the most intense earnestness. Suddenly she grew crimson, and snatching her hands from the old man's, hid her face in them, and stood.

"Do you remember anything of all this, my child?" asked Amyas gently.

She lifted up her eyes suddenly to his, with a look of imploring agony, as if beseeching him to spare her. The death of a whole old life, the birth of a whole new life, was struggling in that beautiful face, choking in that magnificent throat, as she threw

back her small head, and drew in her breath, and dashed her locks back from her temples, as if seeking for fresh air. She snuddered, reeled, then fell weeping on the bosom, not of Salvation Yeo, but of Amyas Leigh.

He stood still a minute or two, bearing that fair burden, ere he could recollect himself. Then,—

“Ayacanora, you are not yet mistress of yourself, my child. You were better to go down, and see after poor Lucy, and we will talk about it all to-morrow.”

She gathered herself up instantly, and with eyes fixed on the deck, slid through the group, and disappeared below.

“Ah!” said Yeo, with a tone of exquisite sadness, “The young to the young! Over land and sea, in the forests and in the galleys, in battle and prison, I have sought her! And now!—”

“My good friend,” said Amyas, “neither are you master of yourself yet. When she comes round again, whom will she love and thank but you?”

“You, Sir! She owes all to you; and so do I. Let me go below, Sir. My old wits are shaky. Bless you, Sir, and thank you for ever and ever!”

And Yeo grasped Amyas’s hand, and went down to his cabin, from which he did not reappear for many hours.

From that day Ayacanora was a new creature. The thought that she was an Englishwoman; that she, the wild Indian, was really one of the great white people whom she had learned to worship, carried in it some regenerating change: she regained all her former stateliness, and with it a self-restraint, a temperance, a softness which she had never shown before. Her dislike to Cary and Jack vanished. Modest and distant as ever, she now took delight in learning from them about England and English people; and her knowledge of our customs gained much from the somewhat fantastic behaviour which Amyas thought good, for reasons of his own, to assume toward her. He assigned her a handsome cabin to herself, always addressed her as Madam, and told Cary, Brimblecombe, and the whole crew, that as she was a lady and a Christian, he expected them to behave to her as such. So there was as much bowing and scraping on the poop as if it had been a prince’s court: and Ayacanora, though sorely puzzled and chagrined at Amyas’s new solemnity, contrived to imitate it pretty well, (taking for granted that it was the right thing); and having tolerable masters in the art of manners, (for both Amyas and Cary were thoroughly well-bred men), profited much in all things, except in intimacy with Amyas, who had, running fellow, hit on this parade of good manners as a fresh means of increasing

the distance between him and her. The crew, of course, though they were a little vexed at losing their pet, consoled themselves with the thought that she was a "real born lady," and Mr. Oxenham's daughter, too; and there was not a man on board who did not prick up his ears for a message if she approached him, or one who would not have, I verily believe, jumped overboard to do her a pleasure.

Only Yeo kept sorrowfully apart. He never looked at her, spoke to her, met her even, if he could. His dream had vanished. He had found her! and after all, she did not care for him! Why should she?

So homeward they ran, before a favouring south-west breeze but long ere they were within sight of land, Lucy Passmore was gone to rest beneath the Atlantic waves.

CHAPTER XXIV

HOW AMYAS CAME HOME THE THIRD TIME

It is the evening of the 15th of February, 1587, and Mrs. Leigh is pacing slowly up and down the terrace-walk at Burrough, looking out over the winding river, and the hazy sand-hills, and the wide western sea, as she has done every evening, be it fair weather or foul, for three weary years.

What was that? A flash, and then the thunder of a gun at sea.

Mrs. Leigh stopped. The flash was right outside the bar. A ship in distress it could not be. Another flash, another gun. The noisy folks of Northam were hushed at once, and all hurried into the churchyard, which looks down on the broad flats and the river.

There was a gallant ship outside the bar. She was running in, too, with all sails set. A large ship; nearly a thousand tons.

Easily, on the flowing tide, and fair western wind, she has slipped up the channel between the two lines of sandhill. She is almost off Appledore now.

The strange sail passed out of sight behind the hill of Appledore; and then there rose into the quiet evening air a cheer, as from a hundred throats. Mrs. Leigh stood still, and listened. Another gun thundered among the hills; and then another cheer.

Round the Hubbastone she came, at last. And as she opened full on Burrough House, another cheer burst from her crew.

And Mrs. Leigh started with rapid steps towards Bideford.

As she came down Bridgeland-street, she could see the strange,

ship already at anchor in the river. She reached the lower end of the street, when round the corner swept a great mob, sailors, women, 'prentices, hurrahing, questioning, weeping, laughing : Mrs. Leigh stopped ; and behold, they stopped also.

"Here she is !" shouted someone ; "here's his mother !"

"His mother ? Not their mother !" said Mrs. Leigh to herself, and turned very pale ; but that heart was long past breaking.

The next moment, the giant head and shoulders of Amyas, far above the crowd, swept round the corner.

"Make a way ! Make room for Madam Leigh !" — And Amyas fell on his knees at her feet.

She threw her arms round his neck, and bent her fair head over his, while sailors, 'prentices, and coarse harbour-women were hushed into holy silence, and made a ring round the mother and the son.

Mrs. Leigh asked no question. She saw that Amyas was alone.

At last he whispered, "I would have died to save him, mother, if I could."

"You need not tell me that, Amyas Leigh, my son."

Another silence.

"How did he die ?" whispered Mrs. Leigh.

"He is a martyr. He died in the—"

Amyas could say no more.

"The Inquisition ?"

"Yes."

A strong shudder passed through Mrs. Leigh's frame, and then she lifted up her head.

"Come home, Amyas. I little expected such an honour—such an honour—ha ! ha ! and such a fair young martyr, too ; a v. St. Stephen ! God, have mercy on me ; and let me not go mad before these folk, when I ought to be thanking Thee for Thy great mercies ! Amyas, who is that ?"

And she pointed to Ayacanora, who stood close beyond Amyas, watching with keen eyes the whole.

"She is a poor wild Indian girl—my daughter, I call her. will tell you her story hereafter."

"Your daughter ? My grand-daughter, then. Come hither maiden, and be my grand-daughter."

Ayacanora came obedient ; and knelt down, because she had seen Amyas kneel.

"God forbid, child ! kneel not to me. Come home, and let me know whether I am sane or mazed, alive or dead."

"Mother," said Amyas, when they were now past the causeway, "we are rich for life."

"Yes ; a martyr's death was the fittest for him."

"I have brought home treasure untold."

"What, my boy ?"

"Treasure untold. Cary has promised to see to it to-night."

"Very well. I would that he had slept at our house. He was a kindly lad, and loved Frank. Where did he— ?"

"Three years ago, and more. Within two months of our sailing."

"Will your mother love me ?" whispered Ayacanora to Amyas, as she went in.

"Yes ; but you must do what she tells you." Ayacanora pouted.

"She will laugh at me, because I am wild."

"She never laughs at any one."

"Humph !" said Ayacanora. "Well, I shall not be afraid of her. I thought she would have been tall like you : but she is not even as big as me."

This hardly sounded hopeful for the prospect of Ayacanora's obedience : but ere twenty-four hours had passed, Mrs. Leigh had won her over utterly ; and she explained her own speech by saying that she thought so great a man ought to have a great mother. She had expected, poor thing, in her simplicity, some awful princess with a frown like Juno's own, and found instead a healing angel.

Her story was soon told to Mrs. Leigh, who of course, woman-like, would not allow a doubt as to her identity. And the sweet mother never imprinted a prouder or fonder kiss upon her son's forehead, than that with which she repaid his simple declaration, that he had kept unspotted, like a gentleman and a Christian, the soul which God had put into his charge.

"Then you have forgiven me, mother ?"

She led Ayacanora out, and began busying herself about the girl's comforts, as calmly as if Frank and Amyas had been sleeping in their cribs in the next room.

But she had hardly gone upstairs, when a loud knock at the door was followed by its opening hastily ; and into the hall burst, regardless of etiquette, the tall and stately figure of Sir Richard Grenville.

Amyas dropped on his knees instinctively. The stern warrior was quite unmanned ; and as he bent over his godson, a tear dropped from that iron cheek, upon the iron cheek of Amyas Leigh.

"My lad ! my glorious lad ! and where have you been ? Get up, and tell me all. The sailors told me a little, but I must hear every word. I knew you would do something grand. I told your mother you were too good a workman for God to throw away. Now, let me have the whole story. Why, I am out of breath ! To tell truth, I ran three-parts of the way hither."

And down the two sat, and Amyas talked long into the night.

When Salterne heard his daughter's fate, he behaved like a man. Then, Amyas broached the subject of Salterne's share of the treasure.

"My share, Sir ?" he said. "If I understood you, my ship was lost off the coast of Caraccas, three years ago, and this treasure was all won since ?"

"True ; but you, as an adventurer in the expedition, have a just claim for your share, and will receive it."

"Captain Leigh, you are, I see, as your father was before you, a just and upright Christian man : but, Sir, this money is none of mine, for it was won in no ship of mine.—Hear me, Sir ! And if it had been, and that ship"—(he could not speak her name)—"lay safe and sound now by Bideford quay, do you think, Sir, that William Salterne is the man to make money out of his daughter's sin and sorrow, and to handle the price of blood ? No, Sir ! You went like a gentleman to seek her, and like a gentleman, as all the world knows, you have done your best, and I thank you : but our account ends there. The treasure is yours, Sir."

That evening a messenger from Bideford came running breathless up to Burrough Court. The authorities wanted Amyas's immediate attendance, for he was one of the last, it seemed, who had seen Mr. Salterne alive.

Salterne had gone over, as soon as Amyas departed, to an old acquaintance ; signed and sealed his will in their presence with a firm and cheerful countenance, refusing all condolence ; and then gone home, and locked himself into Rose's room. Supper-time came, and he did not appear. The apprentices could not make him answer, and at last called in the neighbours, and forced the door. Salterne was kneeling by his daughter's bed ; his head was upon the coverlet ; his Prayer-book was open before him at the Burial Service ; his hands were clasped in supplication : but he was dead and cold.

CHAPTER XXV

HOW THE VIRGINIA FLEET WAS STOPPED BY THE QUEEN'S COMMAND

JANUARY, 1587-8, had well-nigh run through, before Sir Richard Grenville made his appearance on the streets of Bideford. He had been appointed in November one of the council of war for providing for the safety of the nation, and the West Country had seen nothing of him since. But one morning, just before Christmas, his stately figure darkened the old bay-window at Burrough, and Amyas rushed out to meet him, and bring him in, and ask what news from court.

"All good news, dear lad, and dearer Madam. The Queen shows the spirit of a very Boadicea or Semiramis, and if she had the Spaniard before her now, would verily, for aught I know, feast him as the Scythian queen did Cyrus, with a '*Satia te sanguine, quod sitisti*'."

"I trust her most merciful spirit is not so changed already," said Mrs. Leigh.

"Well, if she would not do it, I would, and ask pardon afterwards, as Raleigh did about the rascals at Smerwick, whom Amyas knows of. Mrs. Leigh, these are times in which mercy is cruelty. Not England alone, but the world, the Bible, the Gospel itself, is at stake ; and we must do terrible things, lest we suffer more terrible ones."

"God will take care of world and Bible better than any cruelty of ours, dear Sir Richard."

"Nay, but, Mrs. Leigh, we must help Him to take care of them !"

Then Sir Richard changed the subject and told Amyas that Raleigh wanted both of them to fit out a fleet of boats to sail to Virginia to take help to the settlers. Mrs. Leigh raised no objection and Amyas was thrilled at the idea ; but he would have much preferred to fight the Spaniards.

The next few months were spent in building and fitting out the ships. During this time, Amyas was very busy and, one day, Mrs. Leigh took him to task, very gently, for neglecting Ayacanora.

"A young heart is one of God's precious treasures, Amyas, and suffers many a long pang in the breaking ; and woe to them who despise Christ's little ones !" she said.

"Break your heart, mother ?"

"Never mind my heart, dear son : yet how can you break it more surely, than by tormenting one whom I love, because she loves you ?"

"Tut ! play, mother, and maids' tempers. But how can I break your heart ? What have I done ? Have I not given up going again to the West Indies for your sake ? Have I not given up going to Virginia, and now again settled to go, after all, just because you commanded ? Was it not your will ? Have I not obeyed you, mother, mother ? I will stay at home, now, if you will. I would rather rust here on land, I vow I would, than grieve you—" and he threw himself at his mother's knees.

"Have I asked you not to go to Virginia ? No, dear boy, though every thought of a fresh parting seems to crack some new fibre within me, you must go ! It is your calling. Yes ; you were not sent into the world to amuse me, but to work. But, Amyas, Amyas, are you so blind as not to see that Ayacanora—"

"Don't talk about her, poor child. Talk about yourself."

"How long have I been worth talking about ? No, Amyas, you must see it : and if you will not see it now, you will see it one day in some sad and fearful prodigy ; for she is not one to die tamely. She loves you, Amyas, as a woman only can love."

"Loves me ? Well, of course. I found her, and brought her home. But as for her caring much for me, mother, you measure every one else's tenderness by your own."

"Think that she owes you somewhat ? Silly boy, this is not gratitude, but a deeper affection, which may be more heavenly than gratitude, as it may, too, become a horrible cause of ruin. It rests with you, Amyas, which of the two it will be."

"You are in earnest ?"

"Have I the heart or the time to jest ?"

"No, no, of course not : but, mother, I thought it was not comely for women to fall in love with men ?"

"Not comely, at least, to confess their love to men. But she has never done that, Amyas ; not even by a look or a tone of voice, though I have watched her for months."

"You would not have me marry her ?" asked blunt, practical Amyas.

"God knows what I would have,—I know not ; I see neither your path nor my own—no, not after weeks and months of prayer. All things beyond are wrapped in mist ; and what will be, I know not, save that whatever else is wrong, mercy at least is right."

"I'd sail to-morrow, if I could. As for marryin' her, mother—her birth, mind me—"

"Ah, boy, boy ! Are you God, to visit the sins of the parents upon the children ?"

"Not that. I don't mean that ; but I mean this, that she is half a Spaniard, mother ; and I cannot !—Her blood may be as blue as King Philip's own, but it is Spanish still ! I cannot bear the thought, that my children should have in their veins one drop of that poison."

"Amyas ! Amyas !" interrupted she, "is this not, too, visiting the parents' sins on the children ?"

"Not a whit ; it is common sense—she must have the taint of their bloodthirsty humour."

"Cruel boy ! to impute as a blame to the poor child, not only the errors of her training, but the very madness of her love !"

"Of her love ?"

"Of what else, blind buzzard ? From the moment that you told me the story of that captain's death, I knew what was in her heart,—and thus it is that you requite her for having saved your life !"

"Umph ! that is one word too much, mother. If you don't want to send me crazy, don't put the thing on the score of gratitude or duty. As it is, I can hardly speak civilly to her (God forgive me !) when I recollect that she belongs to the crew who murdered him—" and he pointed to the picture, and Mrs. Leigh shuddered as he did so.

"You feel it ! You know you feel it, tender-hearted, forgiving angel as you are ; and what do you think I must feel ?"

Amyas was silent for a minute or two ; and then—

"If it were not for you, mother, would God that the Armada would come !"

"What, and ruin England ?"

"No ! Curse them ! Not a foot will they ever set on English soil, such a welcome would we give them. If I were but in the midst of that fleet, fighting like a man—to forget it all, with a galleon on board of me to larboard, and another to starboard—and then to put a linstock in the magazine, and go aloft in good company—I don't care how soon it comes, mother, if it were not for you."

"If I am in your way, Amyas, do not fear that I shall trouble you long."

There was a loud hurried knocking, and in another minute a serving-man hurried in with a letter.

"This to Captain Amyas Leigh, with haste, haste !"

It was Sir Richard's hand. Amyas tore it open ; and "a loud laugh laughed he."

"The Armada is coming ! My wish has come true, mother !"

"God help us, it has ! Show me the letter."

It was a hurried scrawl which he handed to her.

"Forgive me, mother, mother, once for all !" cried Amyas, throwing his arms round her neck.

"I have nothing to forgive, my son, my son ! And shall I lose thee, also ?"

"If I be killed, you will have two martyrs of your blood, mother !—"

Mrs. Leigh bowed her head, and was silent. Amyas caught up his hat and sword, and darted forth toward Bideford.

Amyas literally danced into Sir Richard's hall, where he stood talking earnestly with various merchants and captains.

"Why so merry, Captain Leigh, when all else are sad ?" said a gentle voice by his side.

"Because I have been sad a long time, while all else were merry, dear lady."

At last, upon the twenty-first of June, the clank of the capstans rang merrily across the flats, and amid prayers and blessings, forth sailed that gallant squadron over the bar, to play their part in Britain's Salamis ; while Mrs. Leigh stood watching as she stood once before, beside the churchyard wall : but not alone this time ; for Ayacanora stood by her side, and gazed and gazed, till her eyes seemed ready to burst from their sockets. At last she turned away with a sob—

"And he never bade me good-bye, mother !"

"God forgive him ! Come home and pray, my child ; there is no other rest on earth than prayer for woman's heart !"

They were calling each other mother and daughter then ? Yes : The sacred fire of sorrow was fast burning out all Ayacanora's fallen savageness ; and, like a Phoenix, the true woman was rising from those ashes, fair, noble, and all-enduring, as God had made her.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE GREAT ARMADA

AND now began that great sea-fight which was to determine whether Popery and despotism, or Protestantism and freedom, were the law which God had appointed for the half of Europe, and the whole of future America. It is a twelve days' epic, worthy not of dull prose, but of the thunder-roll of Homer's verse : but

having to tell it, I must do my best, rather using, where I can, the words of contemporary authors than my own.

The Lord High Admirall of England, sending a pinnace before, called the *Defiance*, denounced war by discharging her ordnance ; and presently approaching within musquet-shot, with much thundering out of his own ship called the *Arkroyall*, first set upon the admirall's, as he thought, of the Spaniards (but it was *Alfonso de Leon's* ship). Soon after, *Drake*, *Hawkins*, and *Frobisher* played stoutly with their ordnance on the hindmost squadron, which was commanded by *Recalde*." The Spaniards soon discover the superior "nimbleness of the English ships ;" and *Recalde's* squadron, finding that they are getting more than they give ; in spite of his endeavours, hurry forward to join the rest of the fleet.

Medina the Admirall, finding his ships scattering fast, gathers them into a half-moon and the *Armada* tries to keep solemn way forward.

Thus the great contest opened in real earnest. During the first day *Amyas* is hotly engaged with the *Sta. Catherina* until called off by the Admirall, and not until afterwards does he learn that his arch-enemy, *De Soto*, is in command of the vessel.

Two or three days elapse, each adding to the glory of the English, and the sun goes down upon a glassy sea, and rises on a glassy sea again. But what day is this ? The twenty-fifth, *St. James's-day*, sacred to the patron saint of Spain. He might have sent them, certainly, a favouring breeze ; perhaps, he only means to try their faith ; at least, the galleys shall attack ; and in their van three of the great galliasses thrash the sea to foam with three hundred oars apiece ; and see, not *St. James* leading them to victory, but *Lord Howard's Triumph*, his brother's *Lion*, *Southwell's Elizabeth Jonas*, *Lord Sheffield's Bear*, *Barker's Victory*, and *George Fenner's Leicester*, towed stoutly out, to meet them with such salvos of chain-shot, smashing oars, and cutting rigging, that had not the wind sprung up again toward noon, and the Spanish fleet come up to rescue them, they had gone to their fate.

And now the fight becomes general. *Frobisher* beats down the Spanish admirall's mainmast ; and, attacked himself by *Mexia* and *Recalde*, is rescued by *Lord Howard* ; who, himself endangered in his turn, is rescued in his turn ; while after that day (so sickened were they of the English gunnery), "no galliasse would adventure to fight."

So fares *St. James's-day*. At least, the only fire by which he has answered his votaries, has been that of English cannon : and the *Armada*, "gathering itself into a roundel," will fight no more, but

make the best of its way to Calais, and then to Dunkirk; to join with *Nirna* and the great flotilla of the Netherlands.

So on, before "a fair Etesian gale," which follows clear and bright out of the south-south-west, glide forward the two great fleets, past Brighton Cliffs and Beachy Head, Hastings and Dungeness. Is it a battle or a triumph? For by sea, Lord Howard, instead of fighting is rewarding; old Admiral Hawkins kneels and rises up Sir John, and shaking his shoulders after the accolade, observes to the representative of majesty, that his "old woman will hardly know herself again, when folks call her *My Lady*."

And meanwhile the cliffs are lined with pikemen and musketeers, and by every countryman and groom who can bear arms, led by their squires and sheriffs, marching eastward as fast as their weapons let them, towards the Dover shore.

The danger is not over yet, though Lord Howard has had news from Newhaven that the Guises will not stir against England, and Seymour and Winter have left their post of observation on the Flemish shores, to make up the number of the fleet to an hundred and forty sail—larger slightly, than that of the Spanish fleet, but of not more than half the tonnage, or one third the number of men. The Spaniards are dispirited and battered, but unbroken still; and as they slide to their anchorage in Calais Roads on the Saturday evening of that most memorable week, all prudent men know well that England's hour is come, and that the bells which will call all Christendom to church upon the morrow morn, will be either the death-knell or the triumphal peal of the Reformed Faith throughout the world.

But where is *Amyas Leigh* all this while? Day after day he has been seeking the *Sta. Catharina* in the thickest of the press, and cannot come at her, cannot even hear of her: one moment he dreads that she has sunk by night, and balked him of his prey; the next, that she has repaired her damages, and will escape him after all. He is moody, discontented, restless, even peevish with his men. He can talk of nothing but *Don Guzman*; he can find no better employment, at every spare moment, than taking his sword out of the sheath, and handling it, fondling it, talking to it even, bidding it not to fail him in the day of vengeance. At last, *Drake* was summoned by the Lord Admiral, and returned with a secret commission, which ought to bear fruit that night; and *Amyas*, who had gone with him, helped him till nightfall, and then returned to his own ship as *Sir Amyas Leigh, Knight*, to the joy and glory of every soul on board, except his moody self.

By two o'clock on the Monday morning, eight *fire-ships* "besmeared with wild-fire, brimstone, pitch, and rosin, and all their

ordnance charged with bullets and with stones," are stealing down the wind straight for the Spanish fleet, guided by two valiant men of Devon, Young and Prowse. (Let their names live long in the land !) The ships are fired, the men of Devon steal back, and in a moment more, the heaven is red with glare from Dover Cliffs to Gravelines Tower.

And then breaks forth one of those disgraceful panics which so often follow overweening presumption ; and shrieks, oaths, prayers and reproaches, make night hideous. There are those too on board who recollect well enough Jancbelli's fire-ships at Antwerp three years before, and the wreck which they made of Parma's bridge across the Scheldt. If these should be like them ! And cutting all cables, hoisting any sails, the Invincible Armada goes lumbering wildly out to sea, every ship foul of her neighbour.

The largest of the four galliasses loses her rudder, and drifts helpless to and fro, hindering and confusing. The duke, having (so the Spaniards say) weighed his anchor deliberately instead of leaving it behind him, runs in again after awhile, and fires a signal for return : but his truant sheep are deaf to the shepherd's pipe, and swearing and praying by turns, he runs up Channel toward Gravelines, picking up stragglers on his way, who are struggling as they best can among the flats and shallows : but Drake and Fenner have arrived as soon as he. When Monday's sun rises on the quaint old castle and muddy dykes of Gravelines town, the thunder of the cannon recommences, and is not hushed till night. Drake can hang coolly enough in the rear to plunder when he thinks fit ; but when the battle needs it, none can fight more fiercely, among the foremost ; and there is need now, if ever. That Armada must never be allowed to re-form. If it does, its left wing may yet keep the English at bay, while its right drives off the blockading Hollanders from Dunkirk port, and sets Parma and his flotilla free to join them, and to sail in doubled strength across to the mouth of Thames.

So Drake has weighed anchor, and away up Channel with all his squadron, the moment that he saw the Spanish fleet come up ; and with him Fenner, burning to redeem the honour which, indeed he had never lost ; and the Devon ships have been worrying the Spaniards for two full hours into confusion worse confounded.

But what is that heavy firing behind them ? Alas for the great galliasse ! She lies, like a huge stranded whale, upon the sands where now stands Calais pier.

Soon, on the south-west horizon, loom up larger and larger two mighty ships, and behind them sail on sail. As they near, a shout

greet the Triumph and the Bear ; and on and in the Lord High Admiral glides stately into the thickest of the fight.

True, we have still but some three-and-twenty ships which can cope at all with some ninety of the Spaniards : but we have dash, and daring, and the inspiration of utter need. Now, or never, must the mighty struggle be ended. We worried them off Portugal : we must rend them in-pieces now ; and in rushes ship after ship, to smash her broadsides through and through the wooden castles, "sometimes not a pike's length asunder," and then out again to re-load and give place meanwhile to another. The day goes against them more and more as it runs on ; Seymour and Winter have battered the great San Philip into a wreck ; her masts are gone by the board ; Pimentelli in the San Matthew comes up to take the mastiffs off the fainting bull, and finds them fasten on him instead.

"Go ahead, and pound his tough hide, Leigh," roars Drake off the poop of his ship, while he hammers away at one of the great galliasses. "What right has he to keep us all waiting ?"

Amyas slips in as best he can between Drake and Winter ; as he passes, he shouts to his ancient enemy—

"We are with you, Sir ; all friends to-day !" and slipping round Winter's bows, he pours his broadside into those of the San Matthew, and then glides on to re-load : but not to return. For not a pistol-shot to leeward, worried by three or four small craft, lies an immense galleon ; and on her poop—can he believe his eyes for joy ?—the maiden and the wheel which he has sought so long !

"There he is !" shouts Amyas, springing to the starboard side of the ship. The men, too, have already caught sight of that hated sign ; a cheer of fury bursts from every throat.

"Steady, men !" says Amyas, in a suppressed voice. "Not a shot ! Re-load, and be ready ; I must speak with him first ;" and silent as the grave, amid the infernal din, the Vengeance glides up to the Spaniard's quarter.

"Don Guzman Maria Magdalena Sotomayor de Soto !" shouts Amyas, from the mizen rigging, loud and clear amid the roar.

He has not called in vain. Fearless and graceful as ever, the tall, mail-clad figure of his foe leaps up upon the poop-railing, twenty feet above Amyas's head, and shouts through his visor—

"At your service, Sir ! whosoever you may be."

A dozen muskets and arrows are levelled at him : but Amyas frowns them down. "No man strikes him but I. Spare him, if you kill every other soul on board. Don Guzman ! I am Captain

Sir Amyas Leigh : I proclaim you a traitor and a ravisher, and challenge you once more to single combat, when and where you will."

"You are welcome to come on board me, Sir," answers the Spaniard in a clear, quiet tone : "bringing with you this answer, that you lie in your throat;" and lingering a moment out of bravado, to arrange his scarf, he steps slowly down again behind the bulwarks.

"Coward !" shouts Amyas at the top of his voice.

The Spaniard re-appears instantly. "Why that name, Señor, of all others ?" asks he in a cool, stern voice.

"Because we call men cowards in England, who leave their wives to be burnt alive by priests."

The moment the words had passed Amyas's lips, he felt that they were cruel and unjust. But it was too late to recall them. The Spaniard started ; clutched his sword-hilt : and then hissed back through his closed visor—

"For that word, Sirrah, you hang at my yard-arm, if Saint Mary gives me grace."

"See that your halter be a silken one, then," laughed Amyas, "for I am just dubbed knight." And he stepped down, as a storm of bullets rang through the rigging round his head ; the Spaniards are not as punctilious as he.

"Fire !" His ordnance crash through the sternworks of the Spaniard ; and then he sails onward, while her balls go humming harmlessly through his rigging.

Half-an-hour has passed of wild noise and fury ; three times has the Vengeance, as a dolphin might, sailed clean round and round the Sta. Catharina, pouring in broadside after broadside, till the guns are leaping to the deck-beams with their own heat, and the Spaniard's sides are slit and spotted in a hundred places. And yet so high has been his fire in return, and so strong the deck defences of the Vengeance, that a few spars broken, and two or three men wounded by musketry, are all her loss. But still the Spaniard endures, magnificent as ever ; it is the battle of the thresher and the whale : the end is certain, but the work is long.

"Can I help you, Captain Leigh ?" asks Lord Henry Seymour, as he passes within oar's length of him, to attack a ship a-head. "The San Matthew has had his dinner, and is gone on to Medina to ask for a digestive to it."

"I thank your Lordship : but this is my private quarrel. But if your Lordship could lend me powder—"

"Would that I could ! But so, I fear, says every other gentleman in the fleet."

But in the meanwhile, long ere the sun had set, comes down the darkness of the thunder-storm. But still, through smoke and rain Amyas clings to his prey. She too has seen the northward movement of the Spanish fleet, and sets her topsails ; Amyas calls to the men to fire high, and cripple her rigging : but in vain ; for three or four belated galleys come flashing and sputtering up to the combatants, and take his fire off the galleon. Amyas grinds his teeth, and would fain hustle into the thick of the press once more, in spite of the galleys' beaks.

"Most heroic! Captain," says Cary, pulling a long face ; " if we do, we are stove and sunk in five minutes ; not to mention that Yeo says he has not twenty rounds of great cartridge left."

So, surely and silent, the Vengeance sheers off, but keeps as near as she can to the little squadron, all through the night of rain and thunder.

They are long past Dunkirk now. The Spaniards, sorely battered and lessened in numbers, have, during the night, regained some sort of order. The English hang on their skirts a mile or two behind. They have no ammunition and must wait for more. To Amyas's great disgust, the Sta. Catharina has rejoined her fellows during the night.

"Never mind," says Cary ; " she can neither dive nor fly, and as long as she is above water, we—What is the admiral about ? "

He is signalling Lord Henry Seymour and his squadron. Soon they tack, and come down the wind for the coast of Flanders. Parma must be blockaded still ; and the Hollanders are likely to be too busy with their plunder to do it effectually. Suddenly there is a stir in the Spanish fleet. Medina and the rearmost ships turn upon the English. What can it mean ? Will they offer battle once more ? If so, it were best to get out of their way, for they have nothing wherewith to fight them. So the English lie close to the wind. They will let them pass, and return to their old tactic of following and harassing.

"Here comes a big ship right upon us ! Give him all you have left : and if he will fight us, lay him alongside and die boarding," cried Amyas.

They gave him what they had, and hulled him with every shot ; but his huge side stood silent. He had not the wherewithal to return the compliment.

"As I live, he is cutting loose the foot of his mainsail ! the villain means to run."

"There go the rest of them ! Victoria !" shouted Cary, as one after another, every Spaniard, set all the sail he could.

There was silence for a few minutes throughout the English

fleet ; and then cheer upon cheer of triumph rent the skies. It was over ! The Spaniard had refused battle, and thinking only of safety, was pressing downward toward the Straits again. The Invincible Armada had cast away its name, and England was saved.

"But he will never get there, Sir," said old Yeo, who had come upon deck to gaze upon that sight, beyond all human faith or hope ; "Never, never will he weather the Flanders shore, against such a breeze as is coming up. Look to the eye of the wind, Sir, and see how the Lord is fighting for His people !"

Yes, down it came, fresher and stiffer every minute out of the grey north-west, as it does so often after a thunderstorm." The Spaniards were fain to take in all spare canvas, and lie-to as best they could ; while the English fleet, lying-to also, awaited an event which was in God's hands and not in theirs.

"They will be all ashore on Zealand before the afternoon," murmured Amyas ; "and I have lost my labour ! Oh, for powder, powder, powder ! to go in and finish it at once !"

"Oh, Sir," said Yeo, "don't murmur against the Lord in the very day of His mercies. It is hard, to be sure ; but His will be done."

"Could we not borrow powder from Drake there ?"

"Look at the sea, Sir !"

And indeed, the sea was far too rough for any such attempt. The Spaniards neared the fatal dunes, which fringed the shore for many a dreary mile ; and Amyas had to wait weary hours, growling like a dog who has had the bone snatched out of his mouth, till the day wore on ; when, behold, the wind began to fall as rapidly as it had risen. A savage joy arose in Amyas's heart.

The Armada was defeated, and England saved. But such great undertakings seldom end in one grand melodramatic explosion of fireworks, through which the devil arises in full roar to drag Dr. Faustus for ever into the flaming pit. On the contrary, the devil stands by his servants to the last, and tries to bring off his shattered forces with drums beating and colours flying ; and, if possible, to lull his enemies into supposing that the fight is ended, long before it really is half over. All which the good Lord Howard of Effingham knew well, and knew, too, that Medina had one last card to play, and that was the filial affection of that dutiful and chivalrous son, James of Scotland.

Lord Howard, like the rest of Elizabeth's heroes, trusted James just as much as James trusted others ; and therefore thought good to escort the Armada until it was safely past the domains of that

most chivalrous and truthful Solomon. But on the 4th of August, his fears, such as they were, were laid to rest. The Spaniards left the Scottish coast, and sailed away for Norway ; and the game was played out, and the end was come, as the end of such matters generally come, by gradual decay, petty disaster, and mistake ; till the snow-mountain, instead of being blown tragically and heroically to atoms, melts helplessly and pitiably away.

CHAPTER XXVII

HOW AMYAS THREW HIS SWORD INTO THE SEA

YES, it is over ; and the great Armada is vanquished. And now, from England and from all of Europe, from all of mankind, I had almost said, arose a shout of holy joy, such as the world had not heard for many a weary and bloody century.

The Armada is away on the other side of Scotland, and Amyas is following in its wake.

For when the Lord High Admiral determined to return, Amyas asked leave to follow the Spaniard ; and asked, too, of Sir John Hawkins, who happened to be at hand, such ammunition and provision as could be afforded him, after which Amyas, calling his men together, reminded them once more of the story of the Rose of Torridge and Don Guzman de Soto, and then asked—

“ Men of Bideford, will you follow me ? There will be plunder for those who love plunder ; revenge for those who love revenge ; and for all of us (for we all love honour) the honour of having never left the chase as long as there was a Spanish flag in English seas.”

And every soul on board replied, that they would follow S. Amyas Leigh around the world.

There is no need for me to detail every incident of that long and weary chase ; how they found the Sta. Catharina, attacked her, and had to sheer off, she being rescued by the rest and how they followed her and lost her on several occasions.

So the morning of the sixteenth day wore away, without a sign of living thing, not even a passing gull ; and the black melancholy of the heaven reflected itself in the black melancholy of Amyas. Was he to lose his prey after all ? The thought made him shudder with rage and disappointment. It was intolerable. Anything but that.

“ No, God ! ” he cried, “ let me but once feel this in his accursed heart, and then—strike me dead, if Thou wilt ! ”

"The Lord have mercy on us," cried John Brimblecombe. "What have you said ?"

"What is that to you, Sir ? There, they are piping to dinner. Go down. I shall not come."

And Jack went down, and talked in a half-terrified whisper, of Amyas's ominous words.

All thought that they portended some bad luck, except old Yeo.

"Well, Sir John," said he, "and why not ? What better can the Lord do for a man, than take him home when he has done His work ? Our captain is wilful and spiteful, and must needs kill his man himself ; while for me, I don't care how the Don goes, provided he does go. I owe him no grudge, nor any man. May the Lord give him repentance, and forgive him all his sins : but if I could but see him once safe ashore, as he may be ere nightfall, on the Mortestone or the back of Lundy, I would say, ' Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,' even if it were the lightning which was sent to fetch me."

"But, master Yeo, a sudden death ?"

"And why not a sudden death, Sir John ? Even fools long for a short life and a merry one, and shall not the Lord's people pray for a short death, and a merry one ? Let it come as it will to old Yeo. Hark ! there's the Captain's voice !"

"Here she is !" thundered Amyas from the deck ; and in an instant all were scrambling up the hatchway as fast as the frantic rolling of the ship would let them.

Yes. There she was.

"There she is ; and here we are," said Cary ; "but where is here ! and where is there ? How is the tide, master ?"

"Running up Channel by this time, Sir."

"What matters the tide ?" said Amyas, devouring the ship with terrible and cold blue eyes. "Can't we get at her."

"Not unless some one jumps out and shoves behind," said Cary. "I shall down again and finish that mackerel, if this roll has not chucked it to the cock-roaches under the table."

"Don't jest, Will ! I can't stand it," said Amyas, in a voice which quivered so much that Cary looked at him. His whole frame was trembling like an aspen. Cary took his arm, and drew him aside.

"Dear old lad," said he, as they leaned over the bulwarks, "what is this ? You are not yourself, and have not been these four days."

"No. I am not Amyas Leigh. I am my brother's avenger. Do not reason with me, Will : when it is over, I shall be merry old Amyas again," and he passed his hand over his brow.

"Do you believe," said he, after a moment, "that men can be possessed by devils?"

"The Bible says so."

"If my cause were not a just one, I should fancy I had a devil in me. My throat and heart are as hot as the pit. Would to God it were done, for done it must be! Now go."

Cary went away with a shudder. As he passed down the hatchway he looked back. Amyas had got the stone out of his pocket, and was whetting away again at his sword-edge, as if there was some dreadful doom on him, to whet, and whet forever.

About two Yeo came up to him.

"He is gurs safely now, Sir. The tide has been running to the eastward for this two hours."

"Safe as a fox in a trap. Satan himself cannot take him from us!"

"But God may," said Brimblecombe, simply.

"Who spoke to you, Sir? If I thought that He—There comes the thunder at last!"

"The storm is coming," said he, "and the wind in it. It will be Eastward-ho now, for once, my merry men all!"

"Eastward-ho never brought us luck," said Jack in an undertone to Cary. But by this time all eyes were turned to the north-west, where a black line along the horizon began to define the boundary of sea and air, till now all dim in mist.

"There comes the breeze."

"And there the storm, too."

"Round with the yards, or we shall be taken aback."

The yards creaked round; the sea grew crisp around them; the hot air swept their cheeks, tightened every rope, filled every sail, bent her over. A cheer burst from the men as the helm went up, and they staggered away before the wind right down upon the Spaniard, who lay still becalmed.

"There is more behind, Amyas," said Cary. "Shall we not shorten sail a little?"

"No. Hold on every stitch," said Amyas. "Give me the helm, man. Boatswain, pipe away to clear for fight."

It was done, and in ten minutes the men were all at quarters, while the thunder rolled louder and louder overhead, and the breeze freshened fast.

"The dog has it now. There he goes!" said Cary.

"Right before the wind. He has no liking to face us."

"He is running into the jaws of destruction," said Yeo. "An hour more will send him either right up the Channel, or smack on shore somewhere."

"There ! he has put his helm down. I wonder if he sees larri ?"

In ten minutes more the Spaniard fell off again, and went away dead down wind, while the Vengeance gained on him fast. After two hours more, the four miles had diminished to one, while the lightning flashed nearer and nearer as the storm came up ; and from the vast mouth of a black cloud-arch poured so fierce a breeze that Amyas yielded unwillingly to hints which were growing into open murmurs, and bade shorten sail.

On they rushed with scarcely lessened speed.

"We shall have it now, and with a vengeance ; this will try your tackle, Master," said Cary.

"Get the arms and ammunition under cover, and then below with you all," shouted Amyas from the helm.

"And heat the pokers in the galley fire," said Yeo, "to be ready if the rain puts our linstocks out. I hope you'll let me stay on deck, Sir, in case—"

"I must have someone, and who better than you ? Can you see the chase ?"

No ; she was wrapped in the grey whirlwind. She might be within half a mile of them, for aught they could have seen of her.

And now Amyas and his old liegeman were alone. Neither spoke ; each knew the other's thoughts, and knew that they were his own. The squall blew fiercer and fiercer, the rain poured heavier and heavier. Where was the Spaniard ?

"If he has laid-to, we may overshoot him, Sir !"

"If he has tried to lay-to, he will not have a sail left in the bolt-ropes, or perhaps a mast on deck. I know the stiff-neckedness of those Spanish tubs. Hurrah ! there he is, right on our larboard bow !"

On they swept, gaining fast on the Spaniard.

"Call the men up, and to quarters ; the rain will be over in ten minutes."

Yeo ran forward to the gangway : and sprang back again, with a face white and wild—

"Land right a-head ! Port your helm, Sir ! For the love of God, port your helm !"

Amyas, with the strength of a bull, jammed the helm down, while Yeo shouted to the men below.

She swung round. The masts bent like whips ; crack went the fore-sail like a cannon. What matter ? Within two hundred yards of them was the Spaniard ; in front of her, and above her, a huge dark bank rose through the dense hail, and mingled with the clouds ; and at its foot, plainer every moment, pillars and spouts of leaping foam.

"What is it, Morte ? Hartland ?"

It might be anything for thirty miles.

"Lundy !" said Yeo.

"Look at the Spaniard !"

Yes, look at the Spaniard !

He, too, had seen his danger, and tried to broach-to. But his clumsy mass refused to obey the helm ; he struggled a moment, half hid in foam ; fell away again, and rushed upon his doom.

"Lost ! lost ! lost !" cried Amyas madly, and throwing up his hands, let go the tiller. Yeo caught it just in time.

"Sir ! Sir ! What are you at ? We shall clear the rock yet."

"Yes !" shouted Amyas in his frenzy ; "but he will not !"

Another minute. The galleon gave a sudden jar, and stopped. Then one long heave and bound, as if to free herself. And then her bows lighted clean upon the Shutter.

An awful silence fell on every English soul. They heard not the roaring of wind and surge ; they saw not the blinding flashes of the lightning : but they heard one long ear-piercing wail to every saint in heaven rise from five hundred human throats ; they saw the mighty ship heel over from the wind, and sweep headlong down the cataract of the race, plunging her yards into the foam, and showing her whole black side even to her keel, till she rolled clean over, and vanished for ever and ever.

"Shame !" cried Amyas, hurling his sword far into the sea, "to lose my right, my right ! when it was in my very grasp ! Unmerciful !"

A crack which rent the sky and made the granite ring and quiver ; a bright world of flame, and then a blank of utter darkness, against which stood out, glowing red-hot, every mast, and sail, and rock, and Salvation Yeo, as he stood just in front of Amyas the tiller in his hand. All red-hot, transfigured into fire ; and behind, the black, black night.

* * * * *

A whisper, a rustling close beside him, and Brimblecombe's voice said softly,—

"Give him more wine, Will ; his eyes are opening."

"Hey day ?" said Amyas faintly, "not past the Shutter yet ! How long she hangs in the wind !"

"We are long past the Shutter, Sir Amyas," said Brimblecombe.

"Are you mad ? Cannot I trust my own eyes ?"

There was no answer for a while.

"We are past the Shutter, indeed," said Cary wryly gently, "and lying in the cove at Lundy."

"Oh, Sir Amyas Leigh, dear Sir Amyas Leigh," blubbered poor Jack, "put out your hand, and feel where you are, and pray the Lord to forgive you for your wilfulness !"

A great trembling fell upon Amyas Leigh ; half-earfully he put out his hand ; he felt that he was in his hammock, with the deck-beams close above his head. The vision which had been left upon his eye-balls vanished like a dream.

"What is this ? I must be asleep ! What has happened ? Where am I ?"

"In your cabin, Amyas," said Cary.

"What ? And where is Yeo ?"

"Yeo is gone where he longed to go, and as he longed to go. The same flash which struck you down, struck him dead."

"Dead ? Lightning ? Any more hurt ? I must go and see. Why, what is this ?" and Amyas passed his hand across his eyes. "It is all dark—dark, as I live !" And he passed his hand over his eyes again.

There was another dead silence. Amyas broke it.

"Oh, God !" shrieked the great proud sea-captain, "Oh, God, I am blind ! blind ! blind !" And writhing in his great horror, he called to Cary to kill him and put him out of his misery, and then waited for his mother to come and help him, as if he had been a boy once more ; while Brimblecombe and Cary, and the sailors who crowded round the cabin-door, wept as if they too had been boys once more.

Soon his fit of frenzy passed off, and he sank back exhausted.

They lifted him into their remaining boat, rowed him ashore, carried him painfully up the hill to the old castle, and made a bed for him on the floor, in the very room in which Don Guzman and Rose Salterne had plighted their troth to each other, five wild years before.

Three miserable days were passed within that lonely tower. Amyas, utterly unnerved by the horror of his misfortune, and by the over-excitement of the last few weeks, was incessantly delirious.

"Will," he said, after a while, "this room is as stifling as it is dark. I feel as if I should be a sound man once more, if I could but get one snuff of the sea-breeze."

The surgeon shook his head at the notion of moving him : but Amyas was peremptory.

"Whither ?" asked Cary.

"To the south end. The crag above the Devil's-limekiln. No other place will suit."

Jack gave a murmur, and half-stopped, as a frightful suspicion crossed him.

"That is a dangerous place ! "

"What of that ?" said Amyas, who caught his meaning in his tone: "Dost think I am going to leap over cliff ? I have not heart enough for that. On, lads, and set me safe among the rocks."

So slowly, and painfully, they went on, while Amyas murmured to himself,—

"No, no other place will suit ; I can see all thence."

So on they went to the point, where the cyclopean wall of granite cliff which forms the western side of Lundy, ends sheer in a precipice of some three hundred feet.

"Why should I not ? Why have I been raving in hell-fire for I know not how many days, but to find out that, John Brimblecombe, thou better man than I ? "

"Not that last : but Amen ! Amen ! and The Lord has indeed had mercy upon thee ! " said Jack, through his honest tears.

"Amen ! " said Amyas. "Now set me where I can rest among the rocks without fear of falling—for life is sweet still, even without eyes, friends—and leave me to myself awhile."

It was no easy matter to find a safe place ; for from the foot of the crag the heathery turf slopes down all but upright, on one side to a cliff which overhangs a shoreless cove of deep dark sea, and on the other to an abyss even more hideous, where the solid rock has sunk away, and opened inland in the hillside a smooth-walled pit, some sixty feet square and some hundred and fifty in depth, aptly known then as now, as the Devil's-limekiln ; the mouth of which, as old wives say, was once closed by the Shutter-rock itself, till the fiend in malice hurled it into the sea, to be a pest to mariners. A narrow and untrodden cavern at the bottom connects it with the outer sea ; they could even then hear the mysterious thunder and gurgle of the surge in the subterranean adit, as it rolled huge boulders to and fro in darkness, and forced before it gusts of pent-up air. It was a spot to curdle weak blood, and to make weak heads reel ; but all the fitter on that account for Amyas and his fancy.

"You can sit here as in an arm-chair," said Cary, helping him down to one of those square natural seats so common in the granite tors.

"Good ; now turn my face to the Shutter. Be sure and exact. So. Do I face it full ? "

"Full," said Cary.

"Then I need no eyes wherewith to see what is before me," said he with a sad smile.

After a pause, he became cheerful. "I have reason to be cheerful, Sir John," he said. "I have left a heavy load behind me.

I have been wilful, and proud, and a blasphemér, and swollen with cruelty and pride ; and God has brought me low for it, and cut me off from my evil delight. No more Spaniard-hunting for me now, my masters. God will send no such fools as I upon His errands."

Then, he explained why he had become cheerful.

"When you put me there upon the rock, lads. I looked away and out to sea, to get one last snuff of the merry sea-breeze, which will never sail me again. And as I looked, I tell yot, the truth, I could see the water and the sky ; as plain as ever I saw them, till I thought my sight was come again. But soon I knew it was not so ; for I saw more than man could see ; right over the ocean as I live, and away to the Spanish Main. And I saw Barbados, and Grenada, and all the isles that we ever sailed by ; and La Guayra in Caraccas, and the Silla, and the house beneath it where she lived. And I saw him walking with her, on the barbecue, and he loved her then. I saw what I saw ; and he loved her ; and I say he loves her still.

"Then I saw the cliffs beneath me, and the Gull-rock, and the Shuttle, and the Ledge ; I saw them, William Cary, and the weeds beneath the merry blue sea. And I saw the grand old galleon, Will ; she has righted with the sweeping of the tide. She lies in fifteen fathoms, at the edge of the rocks, upon the sand ; and her men are all lying around her, asleep until the judgment-day."

"And I saw him sitting in his cabin, like a valiant gentleman of Spain ; and his officers were sitting round him, with their swords upon the table, at the wine. And the prawns and the crayfish and the rockling, they swam in and out above their heads ; but Don Guzman he never heeded, but sat still, and drank his wine. Then he took a locket from his bosom ; and I heard him speak, Will, and he said : ' Here's the picture of my fair and true lady ; drink to her, Señors all.' Then he spoke to me, Will, and called me, right up through the oar-weed and the sea : ' We have had a fair quarrel, Señor ; it is time to be friends once more. My wife and your brother have forgiven me ; so your honour takes no stain.' And I answered, ' We are friends, Don Guzman ; God has judged our quarrel, and not we.' Then he said, ' I sinned, and I am punished.' And I said, ' And, Señor, so am I.' Then he held out his hand to me, Cary ; and I stopped to take it, and awoke."

He ceased ; and they looked in his face again. It was exhausted, but clear and gentle, like the face of a new-born babe. Gradually his head dropped upon his breast again ; he was either swooning or

sleeping, and they had much ado to get him home. There he lay for eight and forty hours, in a quiet doze ; then arose suddenly, called for food, ate heartily, and seemed, saving his eyesight, as whole and sound as ever. The surgeon bade them get him home to Northam as soon as possible, and he was willing enough to go. So the next day the Vengeance sailed, leaving behind a dozen men to seize and keep in the Queen's name any goods which should be washed up from the wreck.

CHAPTER XXVIII

HOW AMYAS LET THE APPLE FALL

It was the first of October. Silently, as if ashamed and sad, the Vengeance slid over the bar, and passed the sleeping sand-hills, and dropped her anchor off Appledore, with her flag floating half-mast high : for the corpse of Salvation Yeo was on board.

A boat pulled off from the ship, and away to the western end of the strand ; and Cary and Brimblecombe helped out Amyas Leigh and led him slowly up the hill toward his home.

The crowd clustered round him, with cheers and blessings, and sobs of pity from kind-hearted women ; for all in Appledore and Bideford knew well by this time what had befallen him.

"Spare me, my good friends," said Amyas, "I have landed here that I might go quietly home, without passing through the town, and being made a gazing-stock. Think not of me, good folks, nor talk of me ; but come behind me decently, as Christian men, and follow to the grave the body of a better man than I."

And as he spoke, another boat came off, and in it, covered with the flag of England, the body of Salvation Yeo.

The people took Amyas at his word ; and a man was sent on to Burrough, to tell Mrs. Leigh that her son was coming. When the coffin was landed, and lifted, Amyas and his friends took their places behind it as chief mourners, and the crew followed in order, while the crowd fell in behind them, and gathered every moment ; till ere they were halfway to Northam town, the funeral train might number full five hundred souls.

They had sent over by a fishing skiff the day before to bid the sexton dig the grave ; and when they came into the churchyard, the parson stood ready waiting at the gate.

Mrs. Leigh stayed quietly at home ; for she had no heart to face the crowd ; and though her heart yearned for her son, yet

she was well content (when was she not content ?) that he should do honour to his ancient and faithful servant ; so she sat down in the bay-window, with Ayacanora by her side ; and when the tolling of the bell ceased, she opened her Prayer-book, and began to read the Burial service.

"Ayacanora," she said, "they are burying old Master Yeo, who loved you, and sought you over the wide, wide world, and saved you from the teeth of the crocodile. Are you not sorry for him, child, that you look so gay to-day ?"

Ayaconara blushed, and hung down her head ; she was thinking of nothing, poor child, but Amyas.

The Burial-service was done ; the blessing said ; the parson drew back : but the people lingered and crowded round to look at the coffin, while Amyas stood still at the head of the grave. It had been dug, by his command, at the west end of the church, near by the foot of the tall grey wind-swept tower, which watches for a beacon far and wide over land and sea. Perhaps the old man might like to look at the sea, and see the ships come out and in across the bar, and hear the wind, on winter nights, roar through the belfry far above his head. Why not ? It was but a fancy : and yet Amyas felt that he too should like to be buried in such a place ; so Yeo might like it also.

Still the crowd lingered ; and looked first at the grave and then at the blind giant who stood over it, as if they felt, by instinct, that something more ought to come. And something more did come. Amyas drew himself up to his full height, and waved his hand majestically, as one about to speak ; while the eyes of all men were fastened on him.

Twice he essayed to begin ; and twice the words were choked upon his lips ; and then,—

"Good people all, and seamen, among whom I was bred, and to whom I come home blind this day, to dwell with you till death—Here lieth the flower and pattern of all bold mariners ; the truest of friends, and the most terrible of foes ; unchangeable of purpose, craft of counsel, and swift of execution ; in triumph most sober, in failure (as God knows I have found full many a day) of endurance beyond mortal man. Who first of all Britons helped to humble the pride of the Spaniard at Rio de la Hacha and Nombre, and first of all sailed upon those South Seas, which shall be hereafter, by God's grace, as free to English keels as is the bay outside. Who, having afterwards been purged from his youthful sins by strange afflictions and torments unspeakable, suffered at the hands of the Popish enemy, learned therefrom, my masters, to fear God, and to fear nought else ; and having

acquitted himself worthily in his place and calling as a righteous scourge of the Spaniard, and a faithful soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ, is now exalted to his reward. Amen."

And feeling for his companions' hands, he walked slowly from the churchyard, and across the village street, and up the lane to Burrough gates; while the crowd made way for him in solemn silence, as for an awful being, shut up alone, with all his strength, valour, and fame, in the dark prison-house of his mysterious doom.

He seemed to know perfectly, when they had reached the gates, opened the lock with his own hands, and went boldly forward along the gravel path, while Cary and Brimblecombe followed him trembling; for they expected some violent burst of emotion, either from him or his mother, and the two good fellows' tender hearts were fluttering like a girl's. Up to the door he went, as if he had seen it; felt for the entrance, stood therein, and called quietly, "Mother!"

In a moment his mother was on his bosom.

Neither spoke for awhile. She sobbing inwardly, with tearless eyes, he standing firm and cheerful, with his great arms clasped around her.

"Mother!" he said at last, "I am come home, you see, because I needs must come. Will you take me in, and look after this useless carcase? I shall not be so very troublesome, mother,—shall I?" and he looked down, and smiled upon her, and kissed her brow.

She answered not a word, but passed her arm gently round his waist, and led him in.

"Take care of your head, dear child, the doors are low." And they went in together.

"Will! Jack!" called Amyas, turning round: but the two good fellows had walked briskly off.

"I'm glad we are away," said Cary; "I should have made a baby of myself in another minute, watching that angel of a woman. How her face worked! and how she kept it in!"

"Ah, well!" said Jack, "there goes a brave servant of the Queen's, cut off before his work was a quarter done. Heigho! I must home now, and see my old father, and then,—"

"And then home with me," said Cary. "You and I never part again! We have pulled in the same boat too long, Jack; and you must not go spending your prize-money in riotous living. I must see after you, old Jack ashore, or we shall have you treating half the town in taverns for a week to come."

"Oh. Mr. Carv!" said Jack, scandalized.

"Come home with me, and we'll poison the parson, and my father shall give you the rectory."

"Oh, Mr. Cary !" said Jack.

So the two went off to Clovelly together that very day.

And Amyas was sitting all alone. His mother had gone out for a few minutes to speak to the seamen who had brought up Amyas's luggage, and set them down to eat and drink ; and Amyas sat in the old bay-window, where he had sat when he was a little tiny boy, and read King Arthur, and Fox's Martyrs, and The Cruelties of the Spaniards. He put out his hand and felt for them ; there they lay side by side, just as they had lain twenty years before. The window was open ; and a cool air brought in as of old the scents of the four-season roses, and rosemary, and autumn ginsflowers. And there was a dish of apples on the table : he knew it by their smell ; the very same old apples which he used to gather when he was a boy. He put out his hand, and took them, and felt them over, and played with them, just as if the twenty years had never been : and as he fingered them, the whole of his past life rose up before him, as in that strange dream which is said to flash across the imagination of a drowning man ; and he saw all the places which he had ever seen, and heard all the words which had ever been spoken to him—till he came to that fairy island on the Meta ; and he heard the roar of the cataract once more, and saw the green tops of the palm-trees sleeping in the sunlight far above the spray, and stood amid the smooth palm-trunks across the flower-fringed boulders, and leaped down to the gravel beach beside the pool : and then again arose from the fern-grown rocks the beautiful vision of Ayacanora—Where was she ? He had not thought of her till now. How he had wronged her ! Let be ; he had been punished, and the account was squared. Perhaps she did not care for him any longer. Who would care for a great blind ox like him, who must be fed and tended like a baby for the rest of his lazy life ? Tut ! How long his mother was away ! And he began playing again with his apples, and thought about nothing but them, and his climbs with Frank in the orchard years ago.

At last one of them slipped through his fingers, and fell on the floor. He stooped and felt for it, but he could not find it. Vexatious ! He turned hastily to search in another direction, and struck his head sharply against the table.

Was it the pain, or the little disappointment ? or was it the sense of his blindness brought home to him in that ludicrous common-place way, and for that very reason all the more humiliating ? or was it the sudden revulsion of overstrained nerves, produced by that slight shock ? Or had he become

indeed a child once more ? I know not : but so it was, that he stamped on the floor with pettishness, and then checking himself, burst into a violent flood of tears.

A quick rustle passed him ; the apple was replaced in his hand, and Ayacanora's voice sobbed out,

"There ! there it is ! Do not weep ! Oh, do not weep ! I cannot bear it ! I will get you all you want ! Only let me fetch and carry for you, tend you, feed you, lead you, like your slave, your dog. Say that I may be your slave !" and falling on her knees at his feet, she seized both his hands, and covered them with kisses.

"Yes !", she cried, "I will be your slave ! I must be ! You cannot help it ! You cannot escape from me now ! You cannot go to sea ! You cannot turn your back upon wretched me. I have you safe now ! Safe !" and she clutched his hands triumphantly. "Ah ! and what a wretch I am, to rejoice in that ! to taunt him with his blindness ! Oh, forgive me ! I am but a poor wild girl—a wild Indian savage, you know : but—but—" and she burst into tears.

A great spasm shook the body and soul of Amyas Leigh ; he sat quite silent for a minute, and then said, solemnly—

"And is this still possible ? Then God have mercy upon me a sinner !"

Ayacanora looked up in his face inquiringly : but before she could speak again, he had bent down, and lifting her as the lion lifts the lamb, pressed her to his bosom, and covered her face with kisses.

The door opened. There was the rustle of a gown ; Ayacanora sprang from him with a little cry, and stood, half-trembling, half-defiant, as if to say—"He is mine now ; no one dare part him from me !"

"Who is it ?" asked Amyas.

"Your mother."

"You see that I am bringing forth fruits meet for repentance mother," said he, with a smile.

He heard her approach. Then a kiss and a sob passed between the women ; and he felt Ayacanora sink once more upon his bosom.

"Amyas, my son," said the silver voice of Mrs. Leigh, low, dreamy, like the far-off chimes of angels' bells from out the highest heaven ; "Fear not to take her to your heart again ; for it is your mother who has laid her there."

"It is true after all," said Amyas to himself. "What God has joined together, man cannot put asunder."

From that hour Ayacanora's power of song returned to her, and day by day, year after year, her voice rose up within the happy home, and soared, as on a skylark's wings, into the highest heaven, bearing with it the peaceful thoughts of the blind giant back to the Paradises of the West, in the wake of the heroes who from that time forth sailed out to colonize another and a vaster England, to the Heaven-prospered cry of Westward-Ho !

THE END